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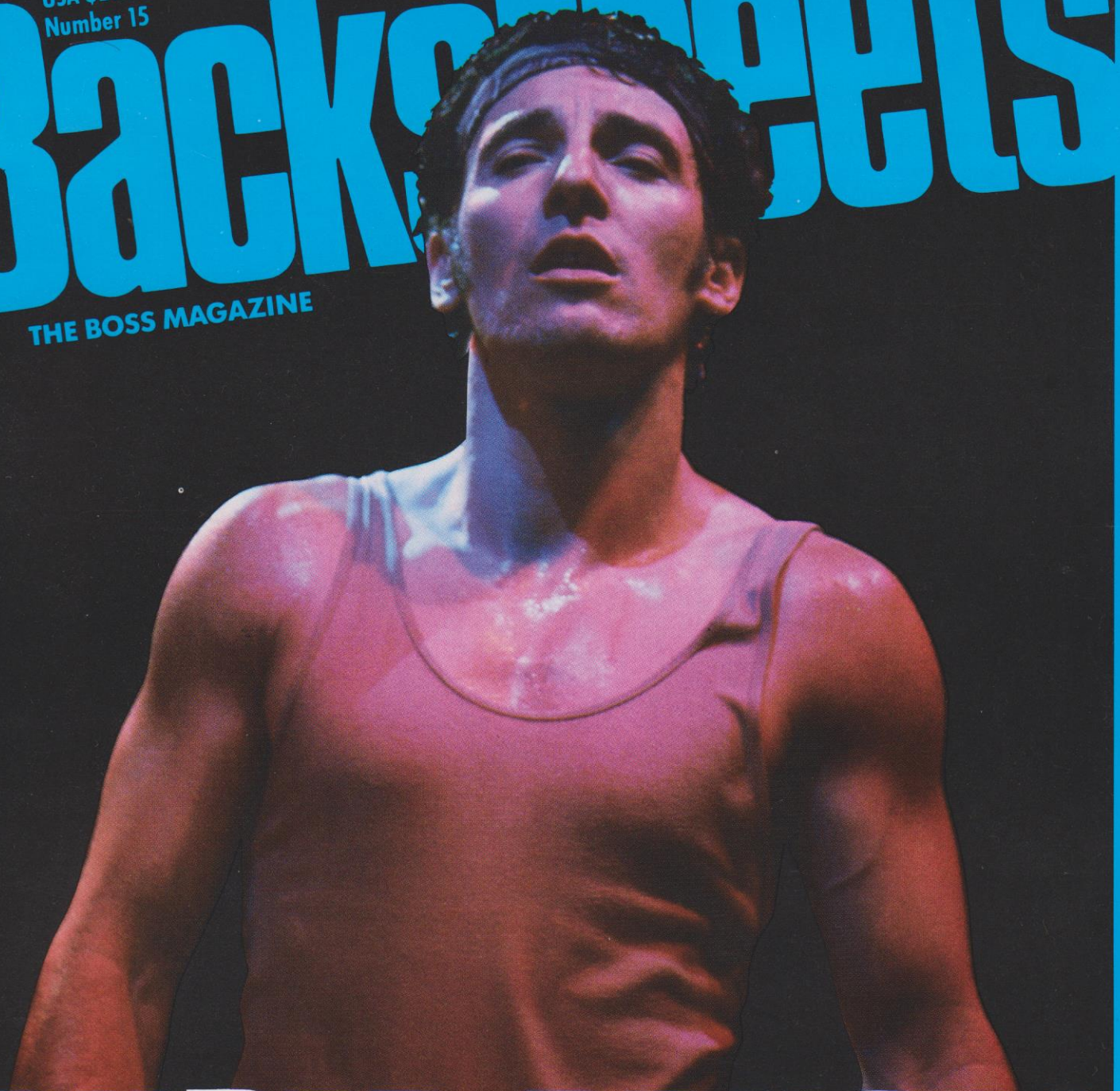
Backstreets

THE BOSS MAGAZINE



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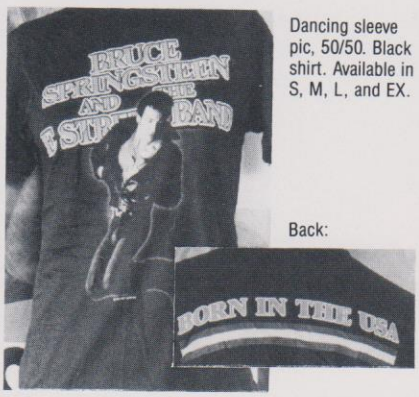

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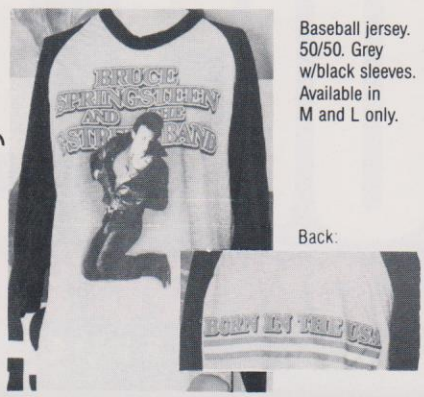

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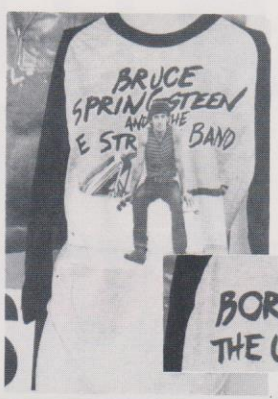

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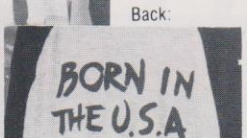

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Backstreets

A BOSS MAGAZINE FOR BRUCE FANS!

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"That apartment you live in
feels like it's just a place to hide,
when you're walking down the street
you won't meet no one in the eye.
Now the cops reported you
as just another homicide,
but I can tell the truth: it was just the
strain of living with. . .
Murder, Incorporated,
down on my knees,
Murder, Incorporated,
everywhere you turn
Murder, Incorporated."

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BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN 1984
Photo by David Denenberg,
Design by Art Chantry

On the backstreets

Walking into the Los Angeles Coliseum for my very first dose of Bruce Springsteen stadium style, I calculated that the crowd assembled would fill up the Bottom Line—the New York City club where on a smokey night in 1974 Bruce Springsteen forever changed the course of my life—this crowd, would fill up that club every single night for almost an entire year. I looked around at the 90,000 fans packing into the Coliseum and felt like I was on another planet.

So it was with more than a little trepidation that I went to my first stadium show. The whole concept felt bad to me: so much of the Bruce Springsteen experience relies on a supernatural intimacy, the fantasy bridge between performer and audience. In eleven years of Bruce shows I had a whole history of intimacies; the show at Richmond's Mosque when Bruce performed "10th Avenue Freezeout" straddling my chair; the time in '78 he sang one for my hometown; the 1980 dance with my girlfriend during "Crush on You;" and the 1984 birthday present he gave my best friend when he pulled her on stage for "Dancing in the Dark." These were moments not probable, perhaps not even possible, in the Coliseum confines.

But I came out of that arena four hours later and while I didn't feel as transformed as I'd felt eleven years earlier, I'm enthused and encouraged by the new political Bruce Springsteen that I saw emerging through that LA show. The concert itself, while not in the same league as the '78 tour (by which everything else can be measured), wasn't much different than the rest of the *Born in the USA* tour played in smaller arenas. The effect of the stadium did not diminish the power of the *Born in the USA* tunes—in fact the union of 90,000 fans heightened the party atmoshere of songs like "Pink Cadillac" and "Glory Days," the current centerpieces of Springsteen's show. The material in general was a bit disappointing: I mean here's a band that can play virtually any song in rock 'n' roll history and a performer whose catalog numbers in the hundreds and every single night of the entire stadium tour he played almost identical sets. As a repeat customer, I couldn't help but find this discouraging.

But there were moments that were pure magic. I almost died when I heard the first notes of Edwin Starr's "War"—it was probably the funkiest song I've ever heard the E Street Band play. It was a monster tune and while playing it all four nights in LA, there was a fire and a passion in Bruce Springsteen's eyes that I had rarely seen during the *Born in the USA* tour.

President Reagan quoting Bruce last election may just turn out to be one of the best of all possible events because ever since that night in Pittsburgh when Bruce ripped into "Johnny 99" and dedicated it to Ronnie, he has finally begun to see the political message that is inherent in his anthems of escape and self-respect. "War" was the highlight of the LA stand but there was also a version of Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" that would make the leaves drop off a willow (Bruce didn't exaggerate when he called it "the greatest song ever written about America."). There was "Seeds," the kind of song Elvis Presley was born to sing but never got the chance. It's been hailed as representing a new era of political Bruce Springsteen songs, an era where Bruce finally writes explicitly about the homespun populism he feels for this nation's people.

It was a big noisy place, I hated the video screens and I hated the way the crowd responsed to what I feel are Bruce's concessions to commercialism like "Dancing in the Dark" but if that's what it takes to hear "Seeds" and "War" I'll keep coming back for more. Every day now I get more and more excited about the prospect of a new album (perhaps years off) and the prospect of the Bruce Springsteen that scrapped *Murder, Inc.* for *Born in the USA*, scrapping his pop throwaways and sexual romps and putting all that passion and power into the sort of political anthems this nation so desperately needs. I don't think I've heard that passion in modern rock so heartfelt as when Bruce sang "This Land is Your Land." I've got faith in the future; I'm ready to ride.

***

On to matter of business. With the holiday season upon us, we'd like to first wish you seasons greetings and to let you know that you can't find a better gift for your Bruce buddies than a gift subscription to *Backstreets*. It's a gift that keeps coming throughout the year. As a bonus, for all gift requests we get before Christmas we'll send out one of our Boss Christmas cards to your friend. These cards are guaranteed collectors items (the ones from two years ago are now advertised by collectors at up to $50).

And remember you can renew your subscription at any time. The label on your magazine lists an "X" followed by a number and that number is the last issue in your current subscription. So if says "X15" this is the last issue in your current subscription. To renew simply send $10 (in the US and Canada) for one year or $18 for two years and we'll add that to your subscription. Don't let your subscription expire: several of our back issues are sold out so if you let it expire you may miss an issue.

As an added bonus, for all current subscribers who renew their subscription for two years during the month of December, we'll send *you* a Boss Christmas Card from us. This is only for two year renewals and only in the month of December 1985. Anyone can, of course, add two years to their subscription regardless of when it is to expire.

If you're not subscribing to *Backstreets* now, you should consider doing so immediately. You'll be guaranteed to get each issue (before it's sold out on the newsstands), you'll get our update info on the new album and tour (when announced) and you'll get your issues delivered (in protective collector's item subscriber-only covers) to your door.

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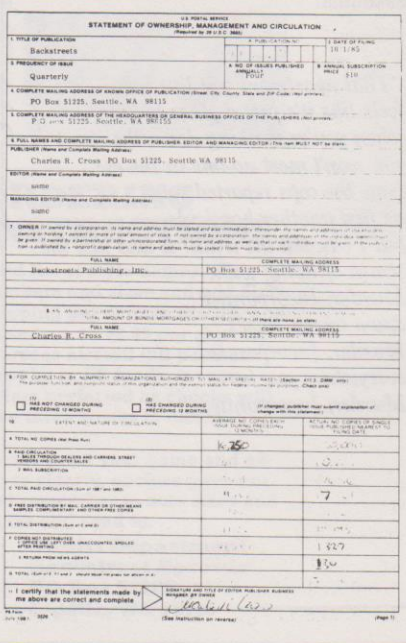
We hope you enjoy the growth and expansion of this magazine. Look for more improvement in our format and in our coverage in the months ahead as we continue to cover the greatest rock 'n' roll in America in a manner that you won't find in any other rock magazine. We greatly appreciate your support and your interest.

Have a happy one. No retreat, baby, no surrender. . .

—Charles R. Cross

Off the wall

The back cover of this issue features our usual Off the Wall section. This issue we've reproduced the UK promo poster for the latest album. The original is a gigantic three by five feet and is one of the nicer Bruce posters we've seen. This was only issued as a promo and not commercially avilable. Thanks to CBS UK. We'll also note here that there are an amazing number of counterfeit posters that were made in Europe around the time of Bruce's tour there. Some of them are nice and some of them are awful so beware when buying European posters. As far as we know the only official posters sold in Europe were the ones that came with the UK 12" "Glory Days," and a weird one from Norway that featured the "I'm on Fire" cover in black and white. If you're buying any other poster beware: You may be getting a counterfeit which may or may not be something you want.



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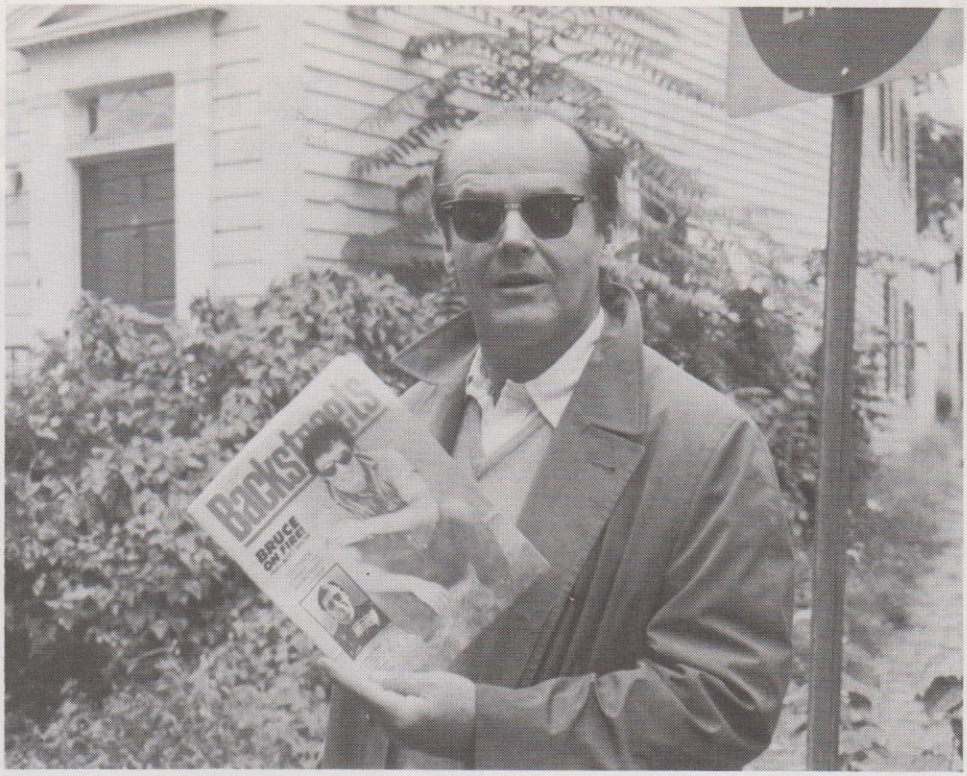
On lips

BOB ZIMMERMAN PHOTO



RAMBO REDUX: Let it be said that anyone who connects the names Bruce Springsteen and Rambo (i.e. the idiots selling "Bruce: The Rambo of Rock" bumper-stickers outside of Giants Stadium) is making a shallow and ignorant assumption. Rambo is a symbol of pinhead patriotism, a jingoistic concept glorifying violence for violence's sake. "Born in the USA" takes almost the exact opposite approach to the same war—it's a song that extolls the awfulness of war, the senseless toll it takes on human life and the way it destroys even the survivors. Anyone who connects this idea with Stallone fails to see Rambo as we do: a character just a shade off from Kurtz in *The Heart of Darkness*. If "Rambo," "Commando" and the dozens of other spinoffs continue to stir up aggression in this nation's youth, Ronald Reagan may well have his fighting force for a Central American war. And that to us, is very scary indeed . . .

POLITICAL BRUCE: On the subject of politics, Jack Newfield's recent piece in the Village Voice on the political side of Bruce Springsteen was the best article we've seen this year about Bruce. It was insighful, well written and full of the inspiration we feel at Bruce shows. It's must reading for every Bruce Tramp. . . A new book of Dave Marsh's collected articles, "Fortunate Son," is out from Random House. It contains many of Marsh's best works and is particularly powerful when Marsh writes about rock in his native Detroit. It also features his 1978 Rolling Stone piece, "Raises Cain," clearly the best thing he's ever written about Bruce, inspired by his fanaticism for Springsteen before that fanaticism turned into an industry. . .On the fanzine front there's a new French zine called *Pink Cadillac*. It's in French so we couldn't understand much. One line did concern us greatly though: "Une jeune Grenobloise se suicide en apprenant le marriage de Bruce." Now excuse our high school French but doesn't that say some young girl killed herself because Bruce got married? Write Pink Cadillac, c/o Patrice Bardot, 24 Rue cler, 75007, Paris, France . . .Still on the subjects of pink cadillacs, a new club is opening in Washington D.C. for fans of the Boss called the Pink Cadillac club. It will take over Annie's, in Georgetown, every Monday night starting December 9th, a must for Bruce Tramps in D.C. A similar club is also planned for New York we hear. . . We caught up with Jack Nicholson recently while he was visiting Washington D.C. Nicholson is, of course, an avid fan of Bruce and of *Backstreets*. "We're old friends from way back," Jack said of Bruce. "We grew up in the same town." Nicholson hails from Neptune, just 14 miles from Asbury Park. . .

BUY JAPANESE: According to several other newspapers, Chrysler offered Bruce $12 million to appear for three seconds in a commercial for the car company. Bruce, smartly, turned them down but that didn't stop Chrysler from ripping off his image anyway . Their new ad jingle, "Born in America," is one of the grossest commercializations we've yet seen. Buy a Honda or a Subaru. . .The imagery from the album cover has also been coopted now many times by several national jean manufacturers. Can't this be stopped?. . .A recent Barrons dealt with the three icons of the American dream. They chose Campbell's Soup, Frankenstein's Monster and Bruce. Nice company. . .New from Rhino Records: "Born in the USSR," the debut album by a Russian band Red Square. . .One steal of Bruce's title we liked was the UCLA Mardi Gras which this year had a booth "Corn in the USA," with a corn dog as Bruce. They even made up t-shirts. College students. . .A promo for weird Al Yankovic's recent tour is a takeoff on the famous Bottom Line poster. . .

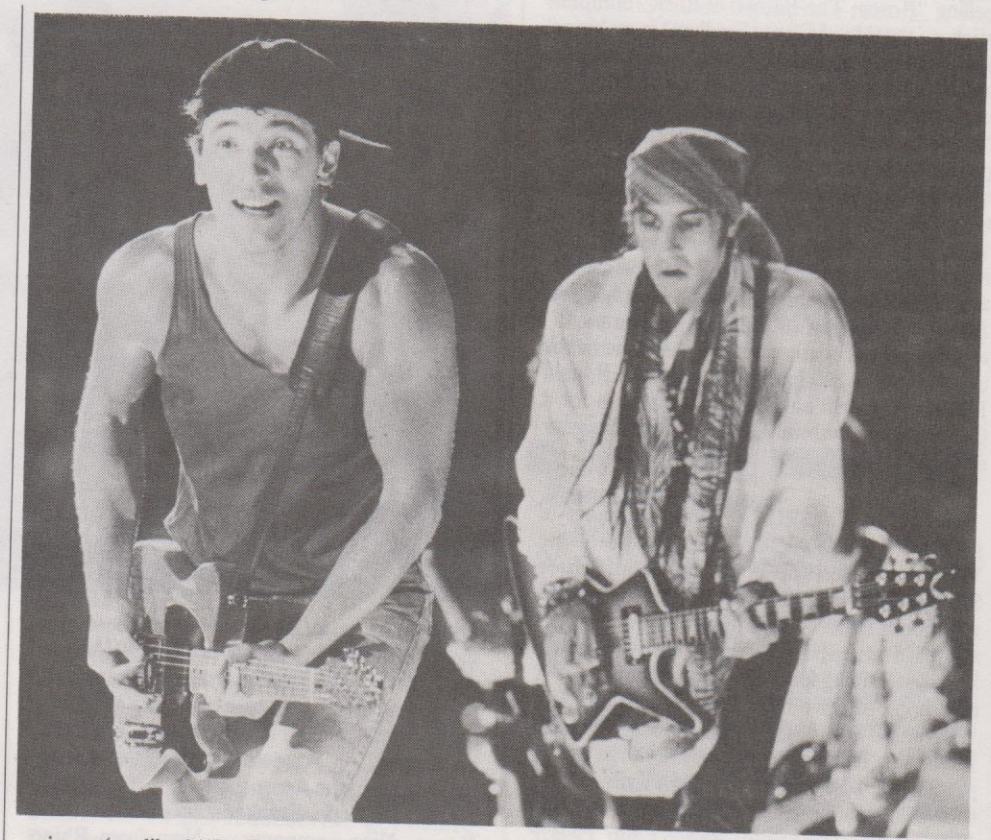
JOHNNY 99: Johnny Cash has recently bought into the Boardwalk. Cash is an investor in and an occupant of the Berkeley Carteret, once the showplace of the Jersey Shore in Asbury Park. Cash gave up a New York apartment for his Asbury Park pad. . .Speaking of real estate, Bruce Springsteen's million dollar Rumson mansion is for sale. Rumor has it Springsteen is looking for a bigger spread with space to build his own studio. . .On to other more random notes: Garry Tallent's mother came to one of the Giants' Stadium shows to see her boy. When rain cancelled the show Garry took his mom over to the Meadowlands to see Kenny Rogers. backstage, Garry's mom said "I'd rather be here" at a Kenny Rogers show than seeing the E Street Band. That's talent for ya . . .New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley wrote an article for USA Today on why he loves the Boss. Bradley's affection may be real but he badly misquoted the titles to Bruce's album on a tv show that same day. What Bradley clearly would like (he's a sure candidate for a higher office next election) is Bruce's popularity. . .If you think Bill Bradley screwed up Bruce's albums, try out the "Tribute to Springsteen," an awful rip off mag now at local 7 Elevens. A few examples of the many errors: Did you know Bruce released "Not Fade Away" as the second single of *The River*? Also ever heard the song "Surrender" on *Born in the USA*? The rip off mag lists at least three hometowns for Springsteen: Freehold, Asbury Park and Red Bank, quite a feat for Mrs. Springsteen. . .Another funny item: An Austrailian paper asked Bruce this question and we quote here: "During your concert, it's been reported that you give a long kiss to your black (male) drummer. Is this a political symbol?" We're sure this is news to Mrs. Weinberg. . .

FILM FLAM: A recent issue of Carpenter magazine reports: "Bruce Springstein (sic) not content with fundraising concerts for union workers, has chose for the subject of his first film the historic miners' strike of 1920 during which strikers and Pinkerton guards engaged in a bloody gun battle." You heard it first in Carpenter, remember that. . .More accurately, there's finally another film on the market with a Bruce soundtrack. "Dead End Street" opened recently in LA. It's an Israeli film that uses 'Point Blank," "Hungary Heart" and "Jungleland." The Bruce songs made their way into the film because the director was friends with Zuki Lahau, Bruce's old violinist who arranged the permission (more on Zuki in an E Street Band Alumni piece). . .Steve Van Zandt accepted the MTV award for Bruce for the "Dancing in the Dark" video at MTV's recent awards show. An MTV Liner Notes show also featured Steve's "Sun City.". . .John Sayles donated his fee from the "I'm on Fire" video, all $10,000, to a fund to help send ambulances to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. . .

On tour

A click of the heels, and tour ends

By Charles R. Cross



DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

He jumped into the air, said: "I'm just a prisoner of rock 'n' roll," clicked his heels together and suddenly — like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* — Bruce Springsteen was off the road and perhaps mumbling "there's no place like home" as he walked off the stage. And as he left the monolithic stage of the LA Coliseum, he might have felt something like Dorothy, coming back to a greatly different world after many adventures and wild experiences.

When Bruce Springsteen first set off on this tour he was a popular rock star who had sold something like 400,000 copies of his last record (it would be hard to call *Nebraska* a hit with those figures); was recognized in the streets of his hometown but could travel most places incognito; had his hits played on the radio but not much else; and was best known for writing the state rock song of New Jersey.

By the time he clicked his heels in Los Angeles a year and a half later, he was the single most popular American rock star since Elvis Presley shook his hips; his record had become the biggest selling album in the history of Columbia Records; his records dominated both AM and FM radio and even video shows; he was on the cover of almost every magazine in America, even making the National Enquirer; he had played to four continents and almost five million people; and though he didn't run into a scarecrow, a tinman or a lion, he did have a tangle with a wicked witch — in the form of Ronald Reagan, who quoted him.

He conquered the world (and the witch) and came back a greatly changed man. He got married and even pulled his new wife up at the last show for "Dancing in the Dark" ("I always save the last dance for her," he said). He started it all ending the shows with "Rosalita," got bored with that song halfway through so dropped it, and subsequently resurrected it for the final show in LA.

In a year and a half the shows themselves changed dramatically too. They started out an equal mix of old and new but by the time he played the LA Coliseum almost every song off the new record was played and only a handful of early songs were heard. The 1984 shows had highlighted the *Nebraska* songs but by the time of the stadium tour it was the big, bold and brassy numbers that were the focus. And partially because of his battles with the big bad witch, there was a political fire in Bruce's eyes that hadn't been there a year ago. He played "Seeds" every night of the stadium tour and many called it one of his best songs ever. There were longer appeals for food banks, and even a masterful version of "This Land is Your Land," the song that seemed to pull together Bruce's populism and his music.

There were many highlights and many premieres (we liked "Be True" in Largo perhaps better than any), but taken as a whole the tour ended up becoming the "The Bruce Springsteen Show" as Springsteen put aside improvisation (one of the great attributes of his 1978 and earlier shows) in favor of the songs he felt worked best in stadiums.

Almost as soon as the tour ended speculation began about the next record. A Jersey radio station even sponsored a raffle (you pick the date of the next album's release) and the easy money spotted the record almost two years away at a minimum. The band immediately went off in their own directions. Clarence, Nils and Patti with their own albums, and the others to their own projects. Springsteen himself told several sources that the next album would come quicker than others though he also said he expected to take some time off.

Some of the tabloid papers said he planned to have kids and many even reported that his wife was pregnant ("Little Bosses" said the headlines) which at the time she said was news to her. Some rumors said Bruce had asked for five years off and gotten it — others said the new record would be out by Christmas.

Certainly the most common rumor was of a live album and/or video. Several of the shows were recorded and plans have been in the works for eight years for a Springsteen live album so the rumors certainly aren't new — at this point the Beatles, a band that started in 1960 and broke up a decade ago, put out a live album before Bruce did. Whether the live album rumors have more truth this go-through remains unclear.

Some band members have implied that a live album is possible. Certainly CBS is all for it — with *Born in the USA* selling over 13 million at this point, they stand to make millions on a three record live set. What most Bruce Tramps hoped for was a live retrospective, with at least an album's worth of material from all the major tours, though a three record set of just *Born in the USA* material may be more commercial. Many Bruce Tramps expressed remorse at even the consideration of a live record — the theory being that a live record sells out on Bruce's onstage magic. Springsteen himself has seemed to follow this philosophy so far but with all the wheels in motion at this point we're unsure where he stands.

A video project is also greatly speculated on — many of the shows were taped and/or filmed. The market for a Springsteen video would be tremendous and the amount of money to be made is the sort that easily changes one's principles. Veteran fans suggest that a live video would force Springsteen to perform his songs forever as they are captured on that video, an awful constraint at best.

Murder, Inc. still sits in the can, perhaps the best record Springsteen could ever do, but there is little possibility it will ever be released if Bruce follows his normal pattern. If dreams came true, wouldn't that be nice?

On record

Bruce's best B-side in years released

The *Born in the USA* tour may be over but the flood of Bruce Springsteen record releases continues. In the US we had the unprecedented sixth single off *Born in the USA*, "I'm Going Down" b/w "Janey Don't You Lose Heart." The A-side quickly became Springsteen's sixth top ten single and for our money it's the best sounding single released yet.

The B-side is simply wonderful. It's one of those monster unreleased love songs (i.e. "Cindy," "None But the Brave," "Restless Nights," "Rickie") that Springsteen seems compelled to write but, following someone else's bad advice, he never puts these songs on his albums. "Janey" is the best thing we've heard from Bruce in years—the only reservation we have is that rather than release the version originally recorded for *Murder, Inc.* Springsteen chose to rerecord the song and we think the released version suffers when compared to the original. Nils was added to the song and long instrumental fade out was taken away. But in any case it's a great and magical sign that perhaps Bruce will reevaluate his great love songs and, just maybe, some of them may see the light of day.

Plans for the seventh single were in the works. Our rumor line had it as "My Hometown" backed with "War" as recorded live from LA, a great choice for a B-side. We're still rooting for "No Surrender" however—our thinking is that will be the eighth and final single, the logic behind that being it's the most obvious hit song on the record and can probably be a hit without the tour support that the other singles have had.

So far "I'm Going Down" has only been released in Canada and Japan. The Japanese version is absolutely the very best picture sleeve off the new record—it's a foldout sleeve, similar to the "Glory Days."

Speaking of "Glory Days," Spain released both that single and "I'm on Fire" with special promo only unique picture sleeves. Both are classics.

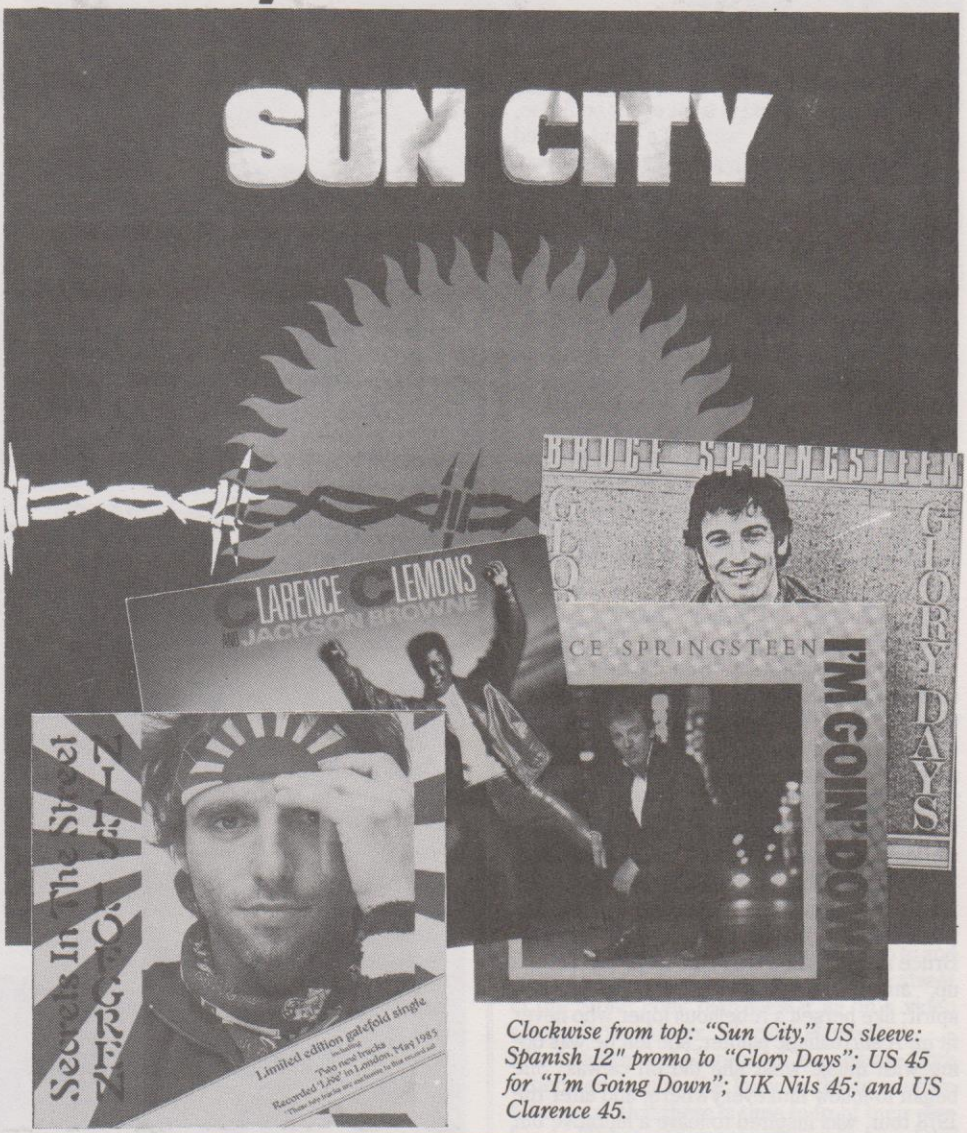
The British released a weird picture disc interview album with Bruce. It's really a beautiful picture disc—the strategy probably was to compete with all the bootlegged picture discs. The record says it was limited to 5,000 copies.

We heard of a couple new South American releases if you can believe that: *Born in the USA* was issued in Venezuela (the titles are in Spanish) and Peru, of all places, supposedly issued *Darkness*.

Australia released an awesome unique four track 12" of "I'm on Fire." We haven't seen it yet but the word is it's a real gem.

Also of note on Bruce records: The compact disc release of *Nebraska* features a different version of "My Father's House." It has an extra 30 seconds of synth. Weird.

On to other E Streeters: Clarence's new album, *Hero*, has finally hit the stores (full review next issue). The first single looks to be a fair hit—it's a duet with Jackson Browne called "You're a Friend of Mine." The B-side is a non lp song titled "Let the Music Say It" (it's nice but no "Summer on Signal Hill"). A 12" of the first single also has been released.



Clockwise from top: "Sun City," US sleeve: Spanish 12" promo to "Glory Days"; US 45 for "I'm Going Down"; UK Nils 45; and US Clarence 45.

Nils had a second single off *Flip*: "Flip Ya Flip." It flopped, which is too bad because it's a great song. In the UK Nils had a little better success. First a picture disc was released "Flip Ya Flip," "New Holes in Old Shoes" and an extended version of "Message." It's a very nice looking picture disc and fairly rare. Also the UK issued a double 45 of Nils: "Secrets in the Street," "From the Heart" back with live versions of "Message" and "Little Bit 'O Time." It's very beautiful sleeve and the live songs are great—a must for any Nils fan.

On the Steve Van Zandt front: "Sun City" was just out at our presstime. If this does not become the biggest song of the year we don't know what will. The album is out soon with several different mixes (everything from a jazz mix to a rap mix). This song is everything that "We Are the World" wasn't: It's a finely crafted, catchy pop classic that packs power and passion in every riff. The line up of stars, in our opinion, is better than the "We Are the World" session because it truely reflects the mixed races of the music industry. Buy the album, buy the single, buy the 12", call your radio station and demand that they play it: This is the record of the year.

And finally on to comedy. Cheech and Chong have now taken their hand at Bruce and the result is "Born in East LA," a hilarious song and video. But what's strange is that at first it sounds like a joke (it is actually funny) but about half way into the video we were taken aback by the true sincerity of the song. Watching Cheech Martin walk through East LA was positively moving: Even as a comedy record the emotional power of this song is real and it still comes through despite the very great limitations of Cheech's voice.

In the news

When it comes to t-shirts, she's the one

By Linda Segall

Not too long ago, on Venice Beach, Dari Silverman stood in front of her boutique, *She's The One*, wearing a hand-painted Elvis tee-shirt, one of a limited edition of two. As she watched the gaudy array of California humanity parade by, she spotted a familiar swagger in the crowd.

"I thought to myself, that guy walks just like Bruce," she recalls. He came closer. It was Bruce, the owner of the *other* hand-painted Elvis tee-shirt. He walked up to her and pointed at the shirt. "I know," she said, "I made it for you." Until that moment, she hadn't known that Bruce received the gift she sent him. Overwhelmed, she was suddenly as a loss for words. "We shook hands and I just thanked him for saving rock and roll."

Since 1978, Dari has made her living selling hand-painted renditions of Bruce's face on tee-shirts, sweatshirts and jackets. She also sells several silk-screened designs, the most popular of which is a picture of Bruce with the caption: "And on the eighth day, God created Springsteen." Patti Scialfa's mother purchased one of these which also comes in a matching bumpersticker. Dari donates half the profits from the sale of these shirts to the Steelworker's Food Bank. Like Bruce, she feels that if you don't give something back to the world, your life doesn't have a whole lot of value.

The exact moment that Bruce transformed Dari's life was in 1973, when a friend played her a new album called *Greetings From Asbury Park*. Bruce sang, "When they said sit down, I stood up," and Dari knew she had found a kindred spirit; like herself a rebellious loner who never fit in. A surrealistic painter, she felt he was doing with music what she did on canvas. She began to follow him everywhere, and after the 1978 tour, was inspired to leave a lucrative but unfulfilling job with a clothing chain and open *She's The One* on the ever colorful Venice Boardwalk.

The store, which is probably about the size of Candy's Room, is more than just a place to buy wearable *objets d'Bruce*. It has become a meeting place for Springsteen lovers of all ages, with customers coming from as far away as New Jersey and beyond. Roller skaters and bicyclists frequently screech to a halt when they hear live recordings blasting out of the front of the shop, part of Dari's collection of some 150 bootlegs given in trade for her hand-painted apparel. Well before the release of *Born in the USA*, Dari got a sneak copy and played it outside the boutique. Within milliseconds, a mob of Springsteen-starved fans assembled and began to dance, blocking all traffic on the Boardwalk. It may be a little store, but it's got a big sound.

A number of Dari's creations were spotted at the L.A. Coliseum during the final four dates of Bruce's mega-tour. In addition to the "Tramps Like Us" and "Jungleland" tee-shirts, everyone who is lucky enough to have one wore their hand-painted creations. On the final night, Dari was escorted by a man named Steve, who wore a knockout jacket with a portrait of Bruce circa 1975. Gawking art-lovers trained their binoculars on it during half-time, and Steve fielded offers in the price range of a scalper's front row seat.

"He can't sell it, though," Dari says. "He's leaving it to me in his will."

On the subject of front row seats, that's exactly where Dari found herself on opening night. "This girl came up to me, a customer, and said 'You're from *She's The One*! You're the best fan in L.A.!"

The girl took her by the hand and deposited her front row center. "I was blown away," says Dari, still basking in the afterglow of the experience, "but I kept thinking of my friends back in our real seats, so I brought them up during the encores."

Since the end of the tour, faced with the gloomy prospect of perhaps not seeing Bruce perform again for several years, Dari made herself a new shirt that expresses her feelings: "Post Bruce Depression."

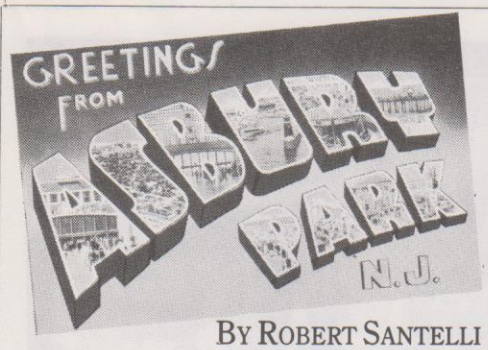
Dari credits Bruce with giving her the courage to take charge of her life. "I didn't want to be like the girl in 'Racing in the Streets,' " she says, "the one whose dreams are torn." Today, Dari has most of her dreams sewn up. There's only one thing she wants.

"Will trade first born child or financial equivalent to see this man," a sign pleads in her display window. Next to it is a picture of Bruce.

(She's The One *is located at 1205 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, CA 90291.)*

RICHARD ALBRIGHT PHOTO

Dari Silverman with Gordon Henderson, a Scotland Backstreets subscriber.



KATHIE MANIACI PHOTO

By Robert Santelli

*(*Greetings From Asbury Park *is a regular column on the Jersey Shore scene by Robert Santelli, Santelli is a noted Jersey writer who worked with Max Weinberg on the classic book* The Big Beat. *Santelli is also the proud father of newborn Jenna Leah, born to the sounds of "Born in the USA." His wife Cindy was having a hard time with delivery; the nurse suggested some soothing music; hence the soundtrack to Jenna's birth.)*

Now that both summer and the Born in the USA tour are over, Asbury Park can finally step out of the spotlight. August at the Jersey Shore was nothing less than a media circus as journalists, reporters, and camera crews swamped the city in search of a Springsteen scoop. With Brucemania climaxing, thanks to his sold-out shows at Giant's Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, clubs like Asbury Park's Stone Pony were inundated with requests from the media to bring cameras and lights inside for special reports and features on Bruce's home turf.

Everyone, it seemed, wanted a piece of Springsteen. Wisely, he and the band kept very low profiles and were impossible to reach. Thus, television reporters and writers from near and far went after the next best thing: stories on Bruce's hangouts, on his friends, on former E Street Band members, on old school mates, and on his fans. The media jockeyed and wiggled for the best Springsteen-related angles. Microphones were stuck in the faces of Stone Pony regulars and employees as virtually every New York-New Jersey metropolitan area TV station and newspaper, plus the major networks and publications like U.S.A. Today and *Rolling Stone* presented special coverage or researched anything remotely related to Springsteen and his past.

One well-intentioned project got sideswiped by all the media attention aimed at Asbury Park. For months, New York filmmaker Margaret Daley had been researching people to interview and places to shoot for her non-profit documentary on Asbury Park and its music scene. Unfortunately, her camera crew was on hand at the Stone Pony during the worst part of the media frenzy. As a result, Daley's project got lost in the shuffle and wound up receiving little of the enthusiasm she had hoped to generate in locals and longtime area bands.

Presently, the documentary is on hold while Daley lets the rest of the dust settle and searches for additional funds to complete filming.

Speaking of the Stone Pony, the club recently hosted the Shore's Second Annual Original Band Competition. Twenty of New Jersey's best, upcoming original bands competed for free recording time at Long Branch's Shorefire Recording Studios. The winner was a Freehold-based group, Paris Project. Asbury Park's Outsider, Paterson's Pompeii, and Long Branch's Wallbangers were runners-up.

The Asbury Park boardwalk after a battering from Hurricane Gloria.

The competition was interesting for a number of reasons. First none of the bands in the final round possessed a sound even remotely linked to Asbury Park's traditional rhythm and blues-influenced rock. Paris Project, for instance, is a slick pop-rock outfit with funk overtones. Pompeii is strongly influenced by Journey, Foreigner and other mainstream rock bands. Outsider reveals shades of U2 and perhaps the Police. And the Wallbangers, who exist on the fringe of the Shore's punk scene, are fiercely independent of any one particular rock style or influence.

Second, the competition proved that there is still strong popular support for bands that play original music, even though fewer area clubs are willing to go with an all-original music format. Currently, only the Stone Pony; Mrs. Jay's, next door to the Pony on Asbury Park's Ocean Avenue; the Brighton Bar in Long Branch; and the Harbor Inn in Brielle work on a regular basis with bands playing original music.

And third, radio support for local bands is shamefully hypocritical. While WHTG of Eatontown helped sponsor the band competition and sent its dj's to act as mcees, the station rarely, if ever, plays independently produced records made by local bands.

Meanwhile, Southside Johnny and the Jukes are busy recording their next album. The band did some summer dates, including a spectacular show at the Garden State Arts Center, where Johnny introduced a couple of new tunes that undoubtedly recall the days of *Hearts of Stone* and *This Time It's For Real*.

Recording news .... John Eddie and Glen Burtnick are busy putting the final touches on their debut albums for late fall or early winter releases. Word has it that a couple of E Street Band members were in the studio with Eddie and will appear on the album. Billy Chinnock, whose lp, *Rock 'n' Roll Cowboys* was released this summer by Alliance Records in Nashville, recently signed with CBS Records. After re-mixing some of the tracks, CBS has re-released the record.

Tidbits .... The Stone Pony Annex has closed. Apparently, people would rather listen to and watch the real thing happening down the street in the Stone Pony than view it all on a video screen in the Annex. We can't blame them .... Nils Lofgren and Clarence Clemons are both scheduled to play the Pony in the immediate future now that there is time to front their own bands. Tickets are expected to go fast, and the Pony expects an onrush of fans hoping that the Boss will show up and jam .... This summer Bobby Bandiera and Kevin Kavanaugh of the Jukes performed at a Belmar bar with a couple of other area musicians as Bobby, Kevin and Friends. Bandiera also headed John Eddie's band, the Front Street Runners while Eddie was recording out in California, and sang the national anthem at the United States Football League's Championship Game held at the Meadowlands .... Carolyn Mas, who now resides at the Jersey Shore and was once dubbed "a female Springsteen," has ended her self-imposed exile and is out playing again. She also contributed a song to the J.A.M. (Jersey Artists for Mankind) charity record which could be out this Christmas, says coordinator, Lee Mrowicki .... Plans are being finalized for LaBamba's Annual Christmas Concert slated for December. There's a strong possibility the show might be staged at the Meadowlands this year. More on the show next column.

KATHIE MANIACI PHOTO

The man behind the Boss' guitars

BY NOEL BROOKS EBNER

The way I see my job it's to make people play better. I make high quality things, and I do unique things to make you as a musician play better. 'What's your performance worth?' is what it comes down to. That's why I have clients like Bruce. He knows exactly what his guitars are going to be like. That's why it sounds so great! He understands that."

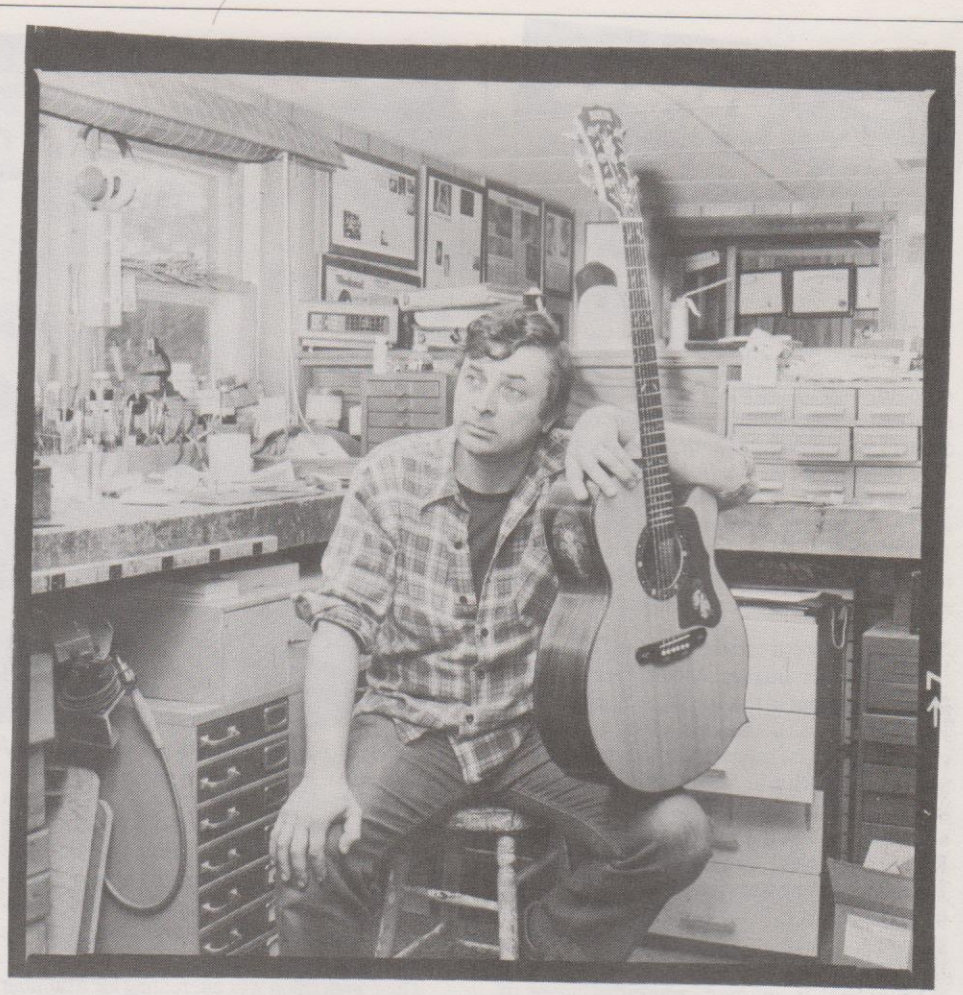
These are the words of Phil Petillo, the man behind Bruce Springsteen's guitars. He has built and worked on guitars for Springsteen, Nils Lofgren, Garry Tallent, Little Steven, Graham Parker, Jim Croce, James Taylor and Elvis Presley among countless other performers.

His shop is located in Ocean, New Jersey, just a short drive from Asbury Park. Inside are all the materials and machinery used to repair and build what are considered some of the finest guitars made in this country. Phil holds patents for everything from pick-ups and fretwire to a tiny surgical saw for Johnson and Johnson. He is responsible for everything used on or in his guitars — what he doesn't make himself he has made to his own specifications.

High standards of workmanship are his natural connection to Bruce Springsteen, a man who also demands the best. That's why a platinum album of *Darkness on the Edge of Town* hangs on the wall of Phil's shop. Phil has been known to say that Bruce "gets carried away" on stage. That's why he has put so much time and effort into making Bruce's guitars reliable. "All the hardware is Titanium, the pickups are specially wound. They are totally unique, that's how we get that special sound. There's a lot of sophisticated electronics under the pickguard. The controls are totally waterproofed so you can literally play the guitar underwater."

Bruce's main guitar is a 1954 Fender Esquire sold to him by Phil in 1969. The guitar originally came from a recording studio in New York City. At one time, there were two output jacks and four pickups on the guitar for recording in stereo. Phil had bought several guitars from this studio and had begun work on some when he received a call from Bruce. Having just finished work on the one guitar, he set up a time for Bruce to try the Esquire out. Bruce played it and then he bought it.

Bruce's five remaining stage guitars are mostly reworked Fender Telecasters. All of them are exactly the same thanks to close work between Phil and Mike Batlin, Bruce's guitar technician. One example is the exact same weight and feel on all the guitar necks — according to Phil this is difficult to achieve because of the size of Bruce's hands.



LUCILLE PETILLO PHOTO

Phil in his New Jersey studio and backstage last summer with Bruce.

Phil is always on call when Bruce is touring. Once, "THE GUITAR" was flown over from Sweden, during the River Tour, by a bonded courier. The courier waited for the repairs to be made and then flew back for the next night's show. "There's been times when I went to a show and I got called in the middle of intermission to fix something. I go to a show and end up working! But I don't mind. It's kind of fun, my kids love it," Phil says.

"The failure rate on Bruce's equipment is low because we have done so much to prevent it from happening. Most of the problems are of a minor nature, mostly with the wireless unit," he adds. "We'll be working on a new type of system when Bruce gets off tour."

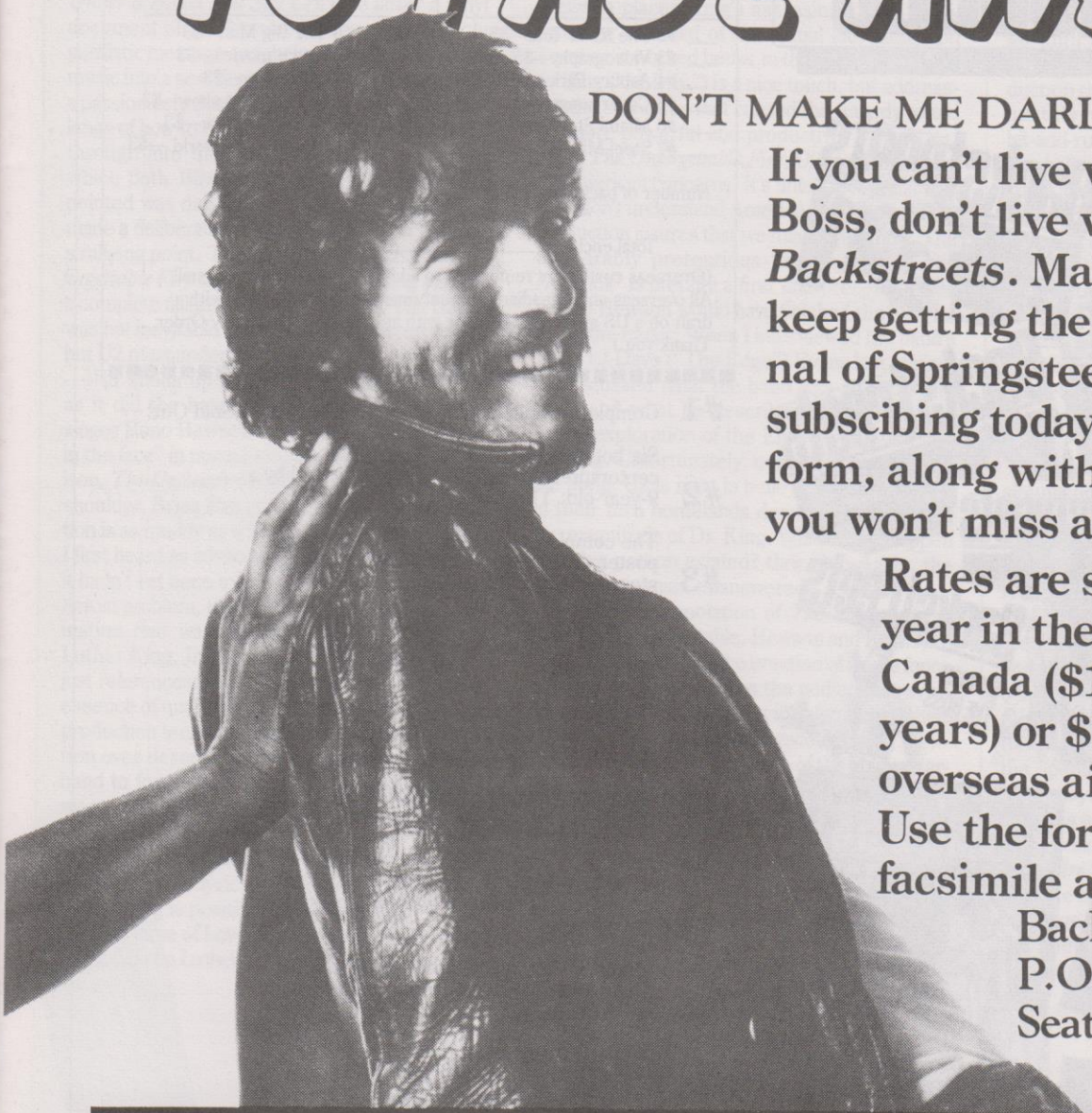
Commenting on why many people don't give Bruce the credit he deserves as a guitar player, Phil said, "Most people see him in the light of an Elvis Presley and as the total performer. The reason you don't see him featured as Bruce Springsteen the Guitarist is because the public and the media have bombarded everybody with Bruce Springsteen the Entertainer, the Songwriter, the Showman."

Long before Phil knew Bruce he'd had his own business building and repairing guitars. It started at age 13 and has continued for 27 years. He has worked with Jimmy DeSario (a famous luthier) and built his present home and shop with his wife Lucille. He has five sons, all of whom have taken a genuine interest in carrying on with their father's business.

Phil has earned an Industrial Engineering degree from Columbia University and was recently nominated for a doctorate by his alma mater. Phil and Lucille are currently working on two books to better educate the guitarist about his instrument.

If you would like to write Phil Petillo about anything concerning musical instruments or his quality line of guitar products, you can write him at: 1206 Herbert Avenue, Ocean, NJ 07712.

'I DON'T WANT TO FADE AWAY...



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#8 Clarence Clemons feature—when the Big Man meets the Boss; German discography; new foreign singles

#9 Bruce in the movies; the new Wild One; Beaver Brown interview; New books on Bruce reviewed; new single

#10 Tour '84 Special: Born in the USA reviewed; Bruce in Japan, discography/feature; Bruce's car

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U2: The fire, the fury and the promise

By Jimmy Guterman

I genuinely like and respect U2. A few years ago I came close to writing a book about them, I admire them so much. Their declared goals are commendable, their songs can ring true at the deepest emotional levels, and they are often inspired musicians. Their *War* and *Under a Blood Red Sky* LPs (the latter a vinyl document of the former), weave their fiercely pacifistic message and their pointedly aggressive music into a seamless gestalt that has won them a passionately devoted mass following. The challenge of how to mobilize their commercial breakthrough into the activist social order toward which both *War* and *Under a Blood Red Sky* pointed was one U2 took seriously: they have made a deliberate attempt to make their new art a rallying point. That attempt, both on *The Unforgettable Fire* and the tour supporting it, was a complete failure, albeit a noble one. The failure was not inevitable and it need not be irrevocable, but U2 must undergo a drastic change to recover.

War shook up radio programmers as surely as it did the band's expanding audience—U2 singer Bono Hewson accurately called it "a slap in the face" in numerous interviews. In comparison, *The Unforgettable Fire* is a meek tap on the shoulder. Brian Eno and Daniel Lonois' production is as muddy as a South Jersey swamp; when I first heard an advance casette, I was convinced it hadn't yet been mixed. References to Dublin's heroin problem, the waste of war, and the abomination that was the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. pervade the disc, but they are just references. Name-dropping. Specificity, the essence of quality writing, never occurs. Eno's production technique has always favored evocation over description and he never pushed the band to focus their work. The album's instruments sound like backing tracks for songs that have yet to be finished.

If *The Unforgettable Fire's* musical ambiguity is annoying, its lyrical refusal to follow through on anything is positively disheartening. "Pride (In the Name of Love)," a deeply felt love letter to Dr. Martin Luther King and the most-focused instrumental track on the LP, loses much of its adrenaline rush power due to Hewson's fractured lyric. It's key lines, "Free at last / They took your life / But they could not take your pride" demean King's true heroism. It is also probably little consolation to King's family that the Reverend's pride remains intact. (It's sloppy, too: Hewson places King's assassination in "early morning" instead of the actual late afternoon because it worked better in the meter.) A lullaby to King ("M.L.K.") is a nice touch, but addressing the ugly issue that caused the tragedy would be more powerful and productive.

On *The Unforgettable Fire*, U2 tackles primarily American concerns. It's unfair to suggest that they don't understand America, but Eno's stifling production insures that we may never know. The unbearably pretentious "Elvis Presley and America" is literally a first take, recorded well before Hewson would have finished the lyric let alone the music. When I interviewed the band's guitarist Dave ("The Edge") Evans last spring, he discussed what the band was after on that track and what he described—an honest and loving exploration of the Elvis myth—was fascinating. Unfortunately, none of it wound up in the song. U2 is right in believing that the strife in their torn homelands demands someone of the magnitude of Dr. King. What might happen if such a person existed? they ask. Again, the questions remain unanswered.

The live extrapolation of *The Unforgettable Fire* is, well, forgettable. Hewson and Evans are far from poseurs, but the erection of a wire fence separating the band from the audience is symbolic. Their onstage behavior also belies their offstage rhetoric. During previous tours, Hewson and Evans stood at the lip of the stage, staring their audience in the eye, making contact. Now they stand at a safe distance, playing an obvious mix of tracks from the new LP and their greatest hits to an audience that does not demand more of them. This slack encourages laziness, the distance greatens, and the band's relevance decreases correspondingly.

To contextualize these criticisms, I am attacking U2 on a high level. There are many other bands who would kill for the level to which U2 has slid. But a new producer is necessary. American Jimmy Iovine, who has worked with the band previously, would be an excellent choice. He understands the mainstream and all who have worked with Iovine assert that he presses them hard on material and doesn't let go until a song is complete. This attitude, diametrically opposed to Eno's laissez-faire production theory, would force U2 to prepare adequately without sacrificing spontaneity. A hit-and-run tour of small venues would also help. In a hall where the last row is in full view of the stage and the band can't hide behind a self-constructed barrier, the intimacy that was absent in the recent tour (and their overblown Live Aid star turn) can be recaptured. Such intimacy can be realized at an arena level and U2 is capable of it. There have been positive signs: Hewson's contribution to Artists United Against Apartheid and his decision to add Bruce Springsteen's "My Hometown" to the band's set both are indicative of a fervent commitment that transcends one bum LP and tour.

A dream: It is May, 1986. U2's fifth studio album ships today. The advance single, a near-perfect fusion of the obsession with the American South and their unique hard rock stylings has become their first American Top 10 single. A fully-realized Arthur Baker remix is also making a significant dent in the dance charts. The credit belongs jointly to producer Jimmy Iovine and the band, who play with the fire of a punk band and the taste of session musicians. Last month, they did a dozen shows in small clubs in the Boston-Baltimore corridor, and tonight is the opening night of a 27-date arena tour. The band plays half the new album, some trusty favorites from the early LPs, a Dylan cover, and new versions of four songs from *The Unforgettable Fire* that finally ring true. The night ends with the band members standing at the edge of the stage, arms around each other, leaning into the audience to slap hands. "We're back," Hewson exults.

Van Zandt/Baker Interview
By Jimmy Guterman

What follows is a transcript of an interview with Steve Van Zandt and Arthur Baker in the programming room of New York City's Unique Sound Studios the evening of August 19, 1985. We were there to discuss their then-embryonic anti-apartheid project, an all-star recording of Van Zandt's "Sun City." Since then the situation in South Africa has been more publicized and the abuses of its "government" more blatant. This has also increased both the visibility (also aided by Bruce Springsteen's recent involvement in the record) and importance of this project. Van Zandt and Baker debuted "Sun City" at the apartheid panel of the New Music Seminar on September 27 while Hurricane Gloria raged outside. By the time this issue of *Backstreets* appears, "Sun City" will have been released as a specially-priced mini-album on Manhattan Records, distributed by Capitol-EMI. Proceeds from the record will be forwarded to the Africa Fund, a UN-recognized organization that supports an end to institutionalized discrimination in South Africa.

This interview was originally conducted for *Rolling Stone*. Any revenue generated by the appearance of this transcript in *Backstreets* will go directly to the Africa Fund. If you wish to contribute to the Africa Fund (it's tax-deductible), write The Africa Fund, 198 Broadway, New York, NY 10038. Many prominent right-wing figures, such as Jerry Falwell and Strom Thurmond, are doubling efforts to encourage increased American investment in the Pretoria regime. Any contribution to the Africa Fund will help counter this cynical move. At least buy the record. The music is as stirring as the message.

Backstreets: Why now?

Van Zandt: The timing is coincidental as far as headlines are concerned. We started this thing six months ago. I focused on Sun City because it's a symbol of apartheid. From there, we thought we'd get a few friends to pitch in, and make a statement of solidarity within the music community. It made sense to do it that way because the record is for the music community. We want people to stop playing Sun City. Also, it's necessary that some group from the United States make some kind of major pro-freedom statement, considering our government's policies. All our government is sending out is negative signals.

Baker: We started working on the record in June. A month after we started, things started to blow up over there. The record had been demoed and sent out to people by the time the story started to be headlnes. People got aware and we got more of a reaction because of what was happening in the newspapers. It was evening news material, not *New York Times* page 4.

Backstreets: Musically, what attracted you to each other?

Van Zandt: We were just friendly.

Baker: We actually did a few things before this. I was working on a track for Jimmy Cliff. I liked what Steven had done with "Solidarity," I liked the version Black Uhuru had cut. I thought it would be cool to write together. It might come out in the movie Jimmy's doing. I don't know what's going to happen with it. Also, I had cut a track using Sly and Robbie for Eddie Kendricks and David Ruffin and Steven wrote the lyrics for that.

For "Sun City," Steve played me his original homemade demo and I liked it. A few days later, we went right in, cut the track, added a few things.

Backstreets: Has there been any response from artists who have played Sun City?

Van Zandt: Not really. The only person who represents that community who's on this record is Jimmy Cliff. He played there, but his case was an exception: he was invited by one of the factions in the black community to play there. He played Sun City as part of a wider South Africa tour. After being in Sun City, he realized that it was a mistake and that it shouldn't happen again. He wanted to be part of this record and we felt that everybody who wanted to be part of this statement should be allowed to.

Van Zandt: "The white South Africans don't see apartheid as some political platform. They see apartheid as God's will. They're taught from birth that it's God's will for blacks to be inferior."

Backstreets: What's this record going to accomplish?

Van Zandt: Like any record, what it accomplishes depends on who it reaches. We hope it will raise consciousness in the music community about what's happening in South Africa. Hopefully, it will make people think twice about playing Sun City. Of course we want to reach everybody and make everybody focus on what's happening in South Africa.

Baker: It's a statement from musicians to other musicians. People have to see that the music community are taking care of their part. If we can stop musicians from playing there, maybe that will influence business people to do their part. It was a really cool idea to focus on Sun City because it's symbolic of everything there. Instead of taking on the whole thing, telling everybody not to do business with South Africa, we made it more personal. We're musicians saying we won't play Sun City.

If corporations now say they won't trade with South Africa, it would cut them off. It's ridiculous that the United States government won't go for tougher sanctions.

Van Zandt: We're not taking a naive point of view. Sanctions alone aren't going to cure the problem there. But we desperately feel it's important to make some kind of statement to the black South Africans that we're with them. It hasn't been done yet.

Backstreets: How do you counter the argument that sanctions like boycotting Sun City are hurting the people they're designed to help?

Van Zandt: That's easy. All you have to do is ask somebody down there. I went down there with an objective, open mind. I wanted to hear everybody's side of the story. The great majority of people I spoke to in the black community support sanctions or a boycott. That's the last word. Our government can't be so arrogant as to think we know what's best for them, which is what we always do with our foreign policy. If we would ever take the time to ask the people in the countries what they want, we would find out. We're not doing that in South Africa, we're not doing that in Central America, we're not doing that anywhere.

Baker: I don't see how anything can be worse than not having freedom. When sanctions come it might look to our untrained eyes as if things are getting worse, but they're not.

Backstreets: What problems did you have putting this together?

Baker: At first, we thought we'd never be able to get all the people we want on the record. But the more people who did it, the more people we got. It's been a snowball effect. We've gotten people like Miles Davis, someone we obviously wanted to get on it from the day we first cut it. The problem has been getting it out on the right label. We want someone who can do a great job distributing it, but we also want a label that's doing it for the right reason.

Van Zandt: We might not get both.

Baker: We might not get a label that's doing it for the right reason, but we'll still get it out there. The bottom line is we want the record to reach as many people as it can. It's most important as an informational tool.

Van Zandt: You start off very idealistic and in the end you take what you can get.

Backstreets: Do you see any nonviolent solutions to the problems in South Africa?

Van Zandt: I went down there looking for peaceful solutions because that's what I believe in. Sadly enough, I don't think so. I came back extremely shocked. Once you really get into what's going on, get beneath the speeches and the manipulations going on in the news, once you get into the fact that they are preaching apartheid in the churches . . . .

Baker: I have family that live in South Africa. We haven't had any contact with them in 15, 18 years. I remember when I was a kid they came over to see my family. My father ended up having to throw them out because they were total racists. They were talking about black people as if they were dirt. They bring up their kids like that. There's no one working on the minds of the young white South Africans to change that.

They've treated black people like shit for so long — they're never going to give up their power willingly. When you treat someone like shit for so long, you have to worry about what

happens when those people come into power.

Van Zandt: It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. If they really intended to share power, they'd be more concerned with education. But they're not. When I was there, I was shocked by the depth of their feelings against blacks. The white South Africans don't see apartheid as some political platform. They see apartheid as God's will. They're taught from birth that it's God's will for blacks to be inferior.

Backstreets: Steve, you were in South Africa before the American presidential election.

Van Zandt: In June, and then in September, for a month in total. When I was there, the whites were praying for Reagan's reelection.

Backstreets: Why aren't Americans more vocal about South Africa?

Baker: "They've treated black people like shit for so long—they're never going to give up their power willingly. When you treat someone like shit for so long, you have to worry about what happens when those people come into power."

Baker: You can't be vocal unless you're informed. People were starving in Ethiopia long before it was big news on television every night. When people were informed, they acted.

Van Zandt: Government manipulation through the media keeps people quiet. Things are starting to change, but the past few years we have gotten all our information about foreign events from the government, and we've accepted them without question. The media is structured in such a way that news is what's reported when a newsman gets his information from a publicist for the State Department. The same thing is happening in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Philippines. Most of our foreign policy is very wrong. Reagan's lying about constructive engagement. It's not working. It's not under control. But people are slowly starting to realize that they're not getting all the facts.

Backstreets: Have the hunger benefits reinstituted some sense of social consciousness in pop music?

Van Zandt: I certainly hope so.

Baker: A few of the people we approached to be on the record turned us down and said that we didn't need another benefit record. That's absurd. If you can make great records, say something, and help people out at the same time, why not keep making them? Just because there were two records made trying to help people who are starving in Ethiopia, there's no reason there shouldn't be a record to help people who are starving for freedom in South Africa.

Van Zandt: There's a lot that hasn't been talked about for a long time.

Backstreets: What should artists who've already played Sun City do?

Baker: People will make their own value judgements after they become more aware of the importance of not playing Sun City and not trading with South Africa. If this record does its job, it will hurt Sun City's ability to lure entertainers.

Van Zandt: The people who played can at least say, "We're wrong. We won't do it again." Asking them to give the money back is a bit much.

Baker: The more educated the fans are, the more the artist is going to be held responsible.

Van Zandt: We're not just talking about musicians. In the video, we're going to try to get sports people to be supportive of this. Every time there's a boxing match or a tennis match . . . .

Baker: John McEnroe wouldn't go to South Africa.

Backstreets: How can focusing on South Africa help problems here?

Van Zandt: South Africa is an exaggeration of what we have here at home. Sometimes you can't see clearly in your own back yard until you see an exaggeration of it elsewhere. Our racial problems are far from over here too. We're not that far removed. We have black neighborhoods, we're relocating American Indians, we have lack of education for minorities. We've got problems.

Backstreets: What's your reaction to Jerry Falwell's recent statements about South Africa and Bishop Tutu?

Van Zandt: It's a great moment for Americans to see the deception. It's no coincidence that Falwell's trip coincides with the sanction vote in Congress. He obviously went as Reagan's emissary. He's no independent do-gooder. He's working for the government. I want to see how Falwell explains to his people, who are supposedly Christians, that the churches are segregated. I want to see him explain how, from birth, they're taught that black people are inferior. I want to see him explain that people are dying every day. He's misrepresenting the situation in the most tragic way, just like Reagan. It's just another example of Falwell and Reagan trying to blend church and state. Reagan's trying to rewrite the Constitution and Falwell is his messenger boy.

Backstreets: Sure, Falwell is trying to move the nation's capital from Washington to Lynchburg. But will his ludicrous statements help expose the lie?

Van Zandt: That's what I think. He's so ignorant. He's got black people on tape who say, "Please don't disinvest." Falwell must know that it's illegal for black people to encourage disinvestment.

I talked to the same people he did and more. I went down there with an open mind, which he certainly didn't. I found an overwhelming feeling for disinvestment. They want a cultural boycott. They're tired of the atrocities. If Falwell says that the great will of the black South Africans is against disinvestment, he's lying. It's a lie that's so obvious that people have to see through it. It's outrageous and beautiful at the same time.

They called him . . .

MADDOG

E Street Alumni

This is the first in a series of articles profiling E Street Band alumni. Coming in the months ahead are articles on Boom Carter, Zuki Lahau, Robin Thompson, David Sancious and more.

By Robert Santelli

Vini Lopez is the Pete Best of the E Street Band. An original member of not only the E Street Band, but also such early Bruce Springsteen-led outfits as Child, Steel Mill, Doctor Zoom and the Sonic Boom, and the Bruce Springsteen Band, Lopez was the one who supplied the backbeat from 1968 to the end of 1973.

Lopez, however, was fired from the band after the recording of *The Wild, the Innocent, and the E Street Shuffle*. There have been a number of things written which purport to explain why he was fired. But in the exclusive interview which follows, Lopez tells his side of the story.

An explosive drummer, one very much influenced by the style of Ginger Baker, and, in his words, "one who experimented all the time," Lopez's fiery drumstyle was packed with power and emotion. "I played every song with as much energy as I could," he recalls. "I worked the drums as hard as I could."

After his dismissal from the E Street Band, Lopez played for a number of Asbury Park-based bands. The more prominent ones included Cold, Blast and Steel; the Shakes; and Lord Gunner. Today, Lopez, now married and working as a carpenter, still resides at the Jersey Shore and plays with the band, J.T. Gotrock.

His intentions, though, are to get back into music with a commitment and zeal that might give him one last crack at making rock 'n' roll a full-time rather than part-time career. "I want nothing more than the chance to get back out on the road, to play every night, and to prove to people that Vini Lopez can play. That's my dream."

Backstreets: Let's get right to the heart of the matter. You were fired from the E Street Band in 1973. Why?

Lopez: I'm a fighter. I was back then and I am now. Back then I felt we (Bruce and the E Street Band) were getting a raw deal from our manager, Mike Appel. I didn't hide my resentment. I let him (Appel) and everyone else know it.

Backstreets: Be more specific. Was there a particular incident which prompted the firing?

Lopez: Well, I just got fed up. I mean Clarence (Clemons) had been arrested because our manager didn't pay Clarence's alimony like he was supposed to. There were money problems. I didn't care about having ten less dollars or whatever. But it was the point. We were being cheated. Well, Mike Appel's brother and I had a few words. I pushed him and he went down. After that, I was told I was to leave the band.

Backstreets: Did you resent being kicked out of the band? You and Bruce went back a long way.

Lopez: I resented it, but there was nothing I could do except ask for a second chance. Which I did. But I didn't get it. There were times when guys in the band today got a second chance because of something that happened. but I didn't. That hurt.

Backstreets: What are your comments concerning the things that have been written about your drum playing? Some people obviously feel the reason you were fired was that your drum playing simply wasn't good enough.

Lopez: I'm not denying I ever made any mistakes as a drummer. I never said I was a perfect drummer. But I could play. There's a mistake on the second album, on the song, "Rosalita." After cutting the song all night, we went back to the studio the next day and I heard the mistake. So I said, "Hey, let me do that part again." Mike Appel said no. And we didn't. So what can I say? If anyone doesn't believe I can play the drums, let them come and check me out. I can keep a backbeat.

Backstreets: Have you and Bruce ever sat down and talked about this so that it didn't interfere with your friendship?

Lopez: No, never. Bruce called me up before the Giants Stadium shows this past summer, and we talked a bit. That was the first time in twelve years that he called me.

Backstreets: Go back for a moment to the early days. How did you and Bruce team up?

Lopez: I was in a band called The Moment Of Truth. When the band broke up, I wanted to get a new band together that played original music. I had heard about Bruce, so me and a friend went to this place called the I.A.M.A., an Italian-American club where Bruce was playing with his band, Earth. I introduced myself, told him I was thinking of putting together an original band, and invited him down to the Upstage club to jam. Months later we finally hooked up at the Upstage and played together for the first time. It was me and Bruce and Little Vini (Roslyn). After we were through playing, Bruce and I went downstairs to the Green Mermaid Room (bottom floor of Upstage) and talked. I said, let's put something together, something with original music. And he told me he'd been writing some songs. So I said, let's do it, and we did. I knew Danny Federici and brought him into the group. Little Vini was the bass player.

Backstreets: And that group eventually became

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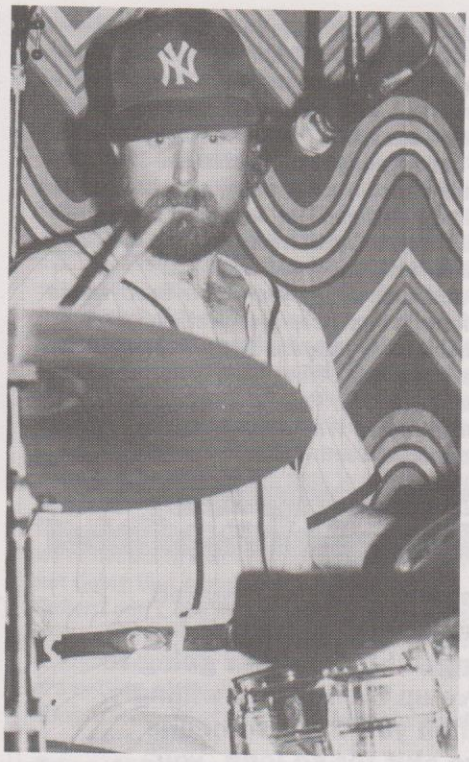
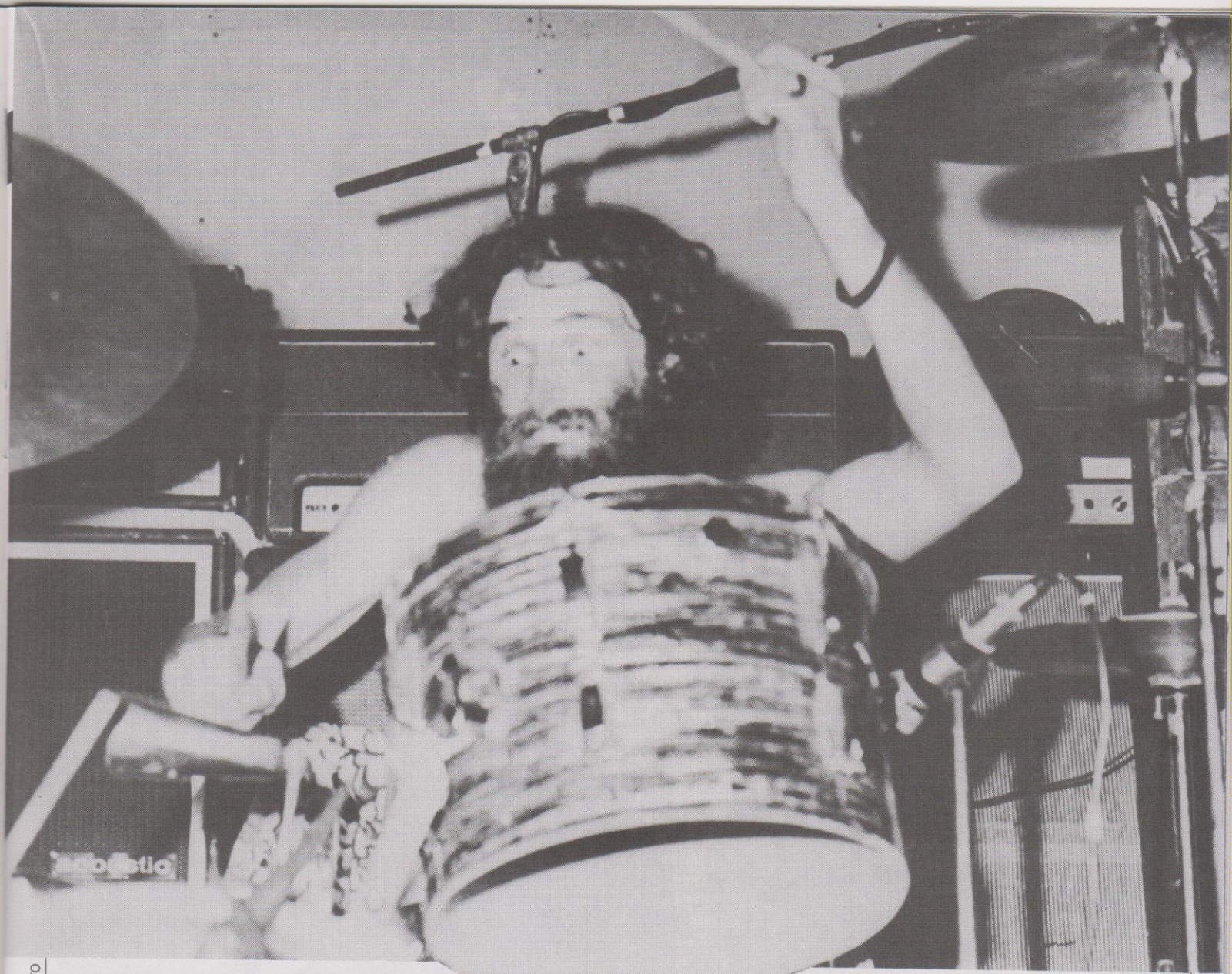


JIM RAGSDALE PHOTO

Vini Lopez. Top, 1982 with Lord Gunner, local shore band; right, in 1970 on stage with the Bruce Springsteen Band; above, vacationing recently in Tampa, and holding up his favorite magazine.



KENNY BARR PHOTO

(Continued from previous page)

Steel Mill.

Lopez: Yeah, but first we were Child.

Backstreets: From what I understand, back then it was you who pretty much played the part of manager. I know Tinker (West) and later, of course, Mike Appel had the title. But you seemed to take an interest in things like making sure the band got paid at gigs and such. Is that correct?

Lopez: Yeah, that's true. Bruce didn't want to do it. And we didn't want Bruce to do it either,. He never put his guitar down long enough, anyway. His job was to write the songs. That was enough right there. But I was a loyal sucker. I wanted to make sure that if we were going to play, then we were going to get paid.

Backstreets: In the old days everyone in the band lived together.

Lopez: Yup. I lived in a bathroom at Tinker's surfboard factory. Danny lived in another bathroom. Bruce and Tinker lived around front in the office.

Backstreets: Back then, and even today, you're known affectionately in some circles, and not so affectionately in other circles as "Mad Dog."

Lopez: At first they called me Loper. That was my nickname. During the Doctor Zoom period I was "Mad Man." It wasn't until the second album that I became "Mad Dog."

"I was the only drummer I knew with 360-degree hair. And I was a homocidal, schizophrenic, paranoid Roman Catholic. That says it all."

Backstreets: During those days when everyone was given nicknames, what was Bruce called?

Lopez: Not the Boss. That came much, much later. He was known as the Doctor.

Backstreets: As in Doctor Zoom.

Lopez: That's right. And Johnny Lyon became Southside Johnny. Garry Tallent was the Funky Chicken. He still is. Steve (Van Zandt) became Miami Steve. I wanted to call him Vegas Van Zandt. He was a ***heavy*** card player back then.

Backstreets: Did you live up to your Mad Dog and Mad Man nicknames?

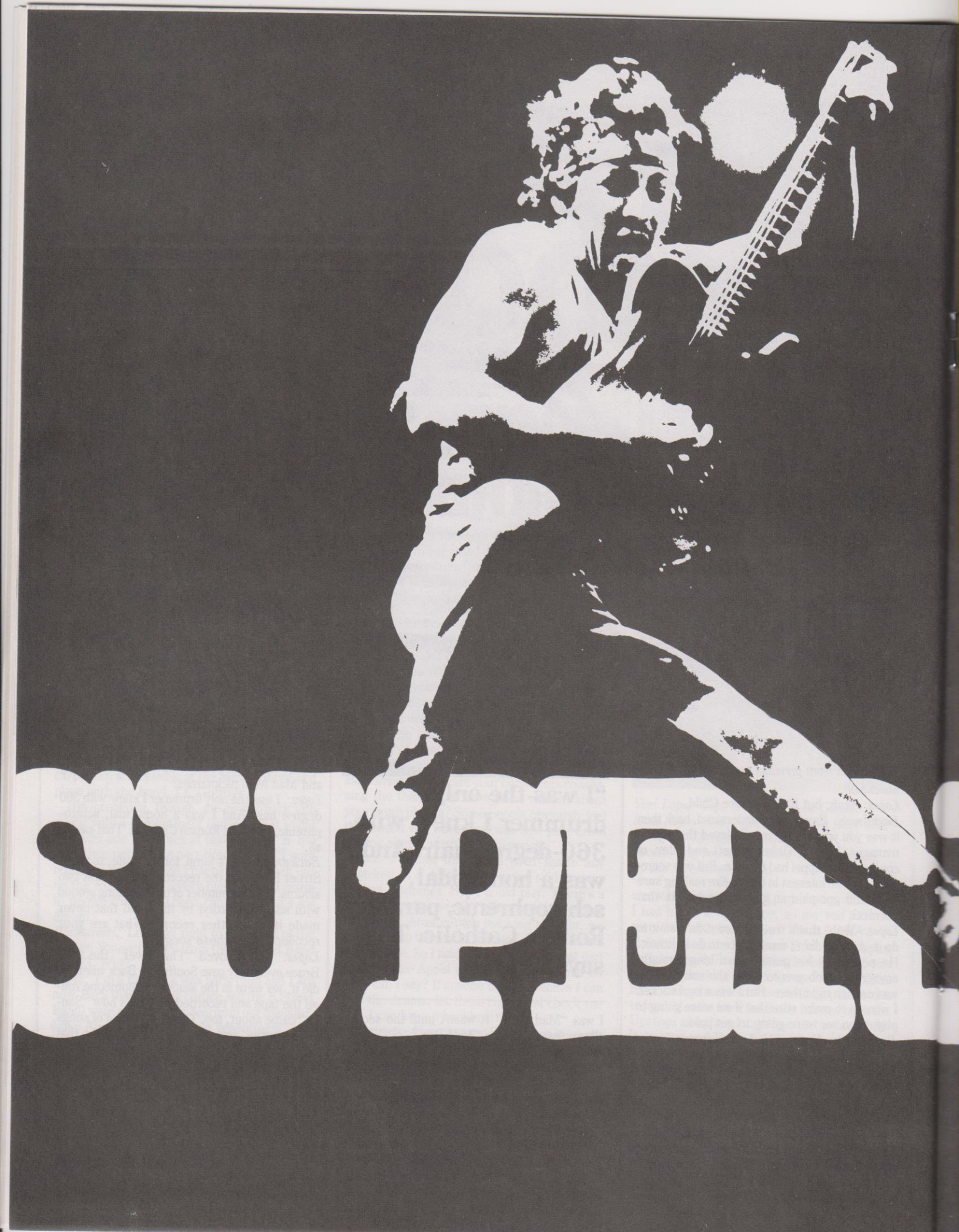
Lopez: I was the only drummer I knew with 360 degree hair. And I was a homocidal, schizophrenic, paranoid Roman Catholic. That says it all.

Backstreets: Let's jump, for a minute, to the E Street Band and the recording of the first two albums. There a number of tapes floating around with songs recorded by the band that never made it onto either record. What are your recollections of those songs?

Lopez: Well, I loved "The Fever," the tune Bruce eventually gave Southside. Back when we did it, we were in the studio and someone rolled the tape and recorded it. That's how "Sandy" came about, too. There were a lot of songs Bruce wrote, and we played in the studio that never appeared on record and were never played live. We kept to a pretty basic songlist for a long time.

Backstreets: Looking back to those days, the days when you were in the band, what goes through your mind?

Lopez: Lots of things. But I try not to dwell on them. Those were great days for me. I wish they never had to end. I guess I would do things differently. But what happened, happened.


SUPER

Kryptonite probably couldn't even stop Bruce Springsteen who this summer seemed something just short of a Superman. On the heels of a year long world tour, enjoying the most successful record in the history of Columbia Records, Springsteen paid a return visit to the US and in just nine weeks played to just short of three million people. There were 28 dates in 14 cities and almost every show (the only exception being the first two shows in Los Angeles' monolithic Coliseum), were completely sold out. Bruce played six shows in New Jersey's Giants Stadium and the way tickets sold out it seemed he could easily have played sixty shows and tickets wouldn't have been much easier to get.

The summer leg of the tour alone grossed over $30 million—more than the gross national product for a third of the nations in the world (and that's not even counting the t-shirts and programs). From the promoters standpoint, it was one of the most successful tours in the history of rock 'n' roll.

But despite the financial success, the question remains: Was it any good? The answer was surprisingly mixed if you use the responses we got as a guide. We asked our readers to write their own short reviews of the stadium shows and we got over 300 responses (though strangely enough no one from either Cleveland or Indianapolis). A great majority of the Bruce Tramps we heard from thought the shows were a success though almost every single reader noted that they would have preferred to see Bruce back indoors again. Those who were seeing Springsteen for the first time all seemed blown away which is still a good sign. Many veteran Bruce Tramps, however, simply stayed away from the shows, choosing to avoid the spectacle that these shows all seemed to turn into.

So out of 300 responses we had to pick one for each city and here they are. Thanks to all of those who entered—we greatly appreciated your time and enjoyed reading all the reviews—we wish space would have allowed us to print more.

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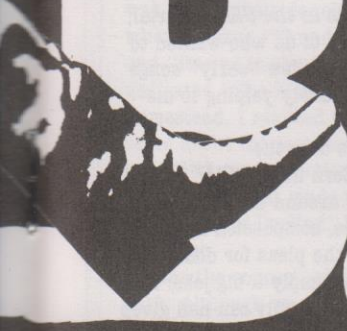
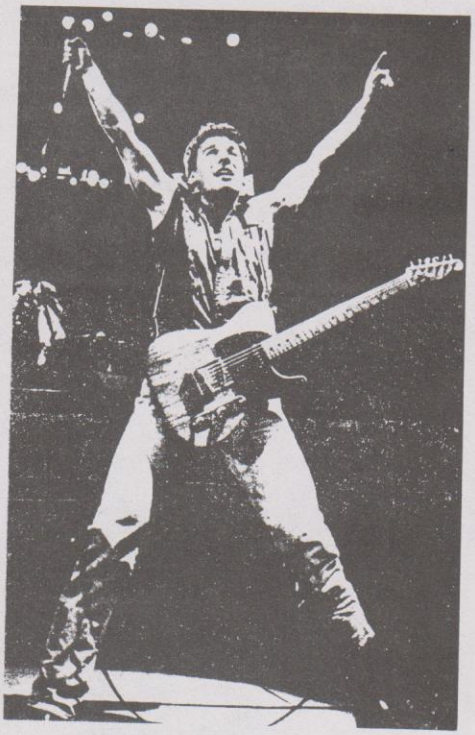
BRUCE



"If there ever were a time when Bruce's songs were the voice of one it is now...."



JEFF BOGUSZ PHOTO

Top: The Boss in D.C.—let the show begin. Bottom: Lines in Chicago, all just for festival seating.

August 5, 1985
Washington, D.C.
RFK Stadium

By Tim Cross
Washington, D.C.

Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium, Washington, D.C.: No venue could be more appropriate for Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band to begin the home stretch of the *Born in the USA* tour. The setting represented the "Springsteen Synthesis:" a combination of the power and muscle of the Redskins and the compassion and social consciousness of Robert Kennedy.

On the one hand they played the classic rockers and rave-ups: "Out in the Street," "Cadillac Ranch," "Darlington County," "Ramrod," and at least a ten-minute "Glory Days" which really brought down the house.

Then there were the darker, sadder songs: "My Hometown," "Man at the Top," "Trapped," "The River" and "Downbound Train." Unfortunately, a steady rumble emanating from the crowd of 54,000 rendered the somber songs and Bruce's introductions less effective than they could have been.

During the two weeks prior to the concert Washington had been witness to a grotesque display of utter greed and selfishness in the form of ticket scalping ("Wanna dance with the Boss?" read one ad; "Front row dead center, $2500 pair"). Thus it was with more than a little irony that I watched as the crowd roared with applause when Bruce put in a plug for three local food banks.

The most moving moment of the night came when Bruce adopted the Robert Kennedy role of champion of the dispossessed — the people to whom "the trickle-down theory of economics ain't trickling down." He lamented the fact that it's our tax money being spent, yet it's the lawmakers who decide whether it goes toward building bombs or toward feeding the hungry. Appropriate here in the nation's capital was his comment that the direction in which this country is headed is "pretty scary." He went on to warn the young people in the crowd that in the next war it would be they who would be called upon to fight; he urged them to take a walk from the Lincoln Memorial to the Vietnam Memorial to get an idea of what the stakes are.

August 7, 1985
Cleveland, OH
Municipal Stadium
(NO REPORT)

August 9, 1985
Chicago, IL
Soldier Field

By Tim Dabareiner
Princeton, NJ

Great confusion over ticket distribution resulted in festival seating for the August 9 show at Chicago's Soldier Field. For our seats, where Bruce was larger than a postage stamp yet far smaller than any other time I'd seen him, we endured a seven plus hour bake on the hot tarp.

During the wait, I had plenty of time to study the two programs on sale and purchase innumberable liters of Dr. Pepper to stave off dehydration. Live Aid-style water hosing cooled the crowd on "the dance floor" (as Bruce called it) later in the day. Treks to the women's restroom involved a 45 minute wait. When the pre-concert music featured *D.E. 7*, no one else around me had any idea that the opening track was a Bruce original.

Incommunicado with the rest of humanity, none of us knew of the afternoon's tragic car/bus accident killing a group of concert-bound kids. I don't know if Bruce learned of it before the show, but he never mentioned it.

Learning of the accident afterwards compounded the few hollow feelings this show left me. For my money, I'd rather share an intimate show with Bruce, not an often-malfunctioning video screen featuring cutsey shots of the Boss' ass. Constantly glancing left and right to see if they'd fixed the screen detracts from a show's immediacy, as does the split-second delay between the visual image and the sound. Stadium shows are as much events as concerts.

Second, some of the newer fans were not only bored during all pre-*Born in the USA* material, but also interupted those of us who wanted to concentrate on the precious few "early" songs Bruce still performs by rudely yelping to distant friends.

Third, my frustrations over the misunderstanding of "Born in the USA" reached a zenith when many around me snickered at Bruce's talks on fairness, compassion and responsiblity. For some the pleas for donations to local food banks were simply a big joke. And out of 70,000 in attendance, only ten had given by show's end.

And what of the show? Even in the stilted stadium environs, I once again failed to control myself when Bruce walked out on stage and the band kicked into the opening number. I simply melt; all pretensions are swept away by the still unbelieveable fulfillment of the rock 'n' roll promise.

Compared to last summer's early tour,

(Continued on next page)

"Wanna dance with the Boss" read one ad, "Front row, dead center, $2500 pair...."

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midwest shows, the band was much tighter, although Miami is still missed. Max is undoubtedly the finest drummer in rock today. Highlights included the songs added since last year, mostly from *Born in the USA* as well as "Trapped" and the incredible "Seeds" (a great omen for the next LP).

However, when Bruce opened the first encore with the stunning solo acoustic "This Land Is Your Land," all my minor annoyances vanished. After this transcendent moment, he roared through "Born to Run" (even the new fans knew this one!). Anyone who can acknowledge the surface contradictions between these songs, yet reconcile the two, understands both the promise and the reality of American life. After an added "Sherry Darling," he says: "Have a good rest of the summer. Take care of yourself, and take care of the guy next to you." The man is a gift.

August 11, 1985
Pittsburgh, PA
Three Rivers Stadium

By Shari DiBiccaro
Butler, PA

The best week of my life began August 11, 1985. After standing in line for 21 hours, I was ready for my week of Bruce Springsteen.

We headed for the concert at 11 a.m., filled with excitement and anticipation. When that magic moment came, and Bruce walked out on stage, I burst into tears. I had been waiting for this moment for a year. I can't even put into words the inspiring emotion that filled within me. When he sang songs like "Darlington County," "Cadillac Ranch," and "Hungry Heart," I was on my chair dancing and singing. But when he sang "Thunder Road," "Johnny 99," and "Racing in the Streets," I cried. When he dedicated "The River" to the unemployed of Homestead, I realized just how much he really cares about the less fortunate. One song he sang with tense emotion was "Downbound Train." But what made my night was the final song "Sherry Darling." I felt he was only singing to me.

After the concert, we headed for Asbury Park. Although we didn't get to see Bruce personally, we met a lot of people who did. We met Madame Marie, toured the Stone Pony, and saw his house in Rumson. It was the best week of my life.

August 14, 15, 1985
Philadelphia, PA
Veterans Stadium

By Marla Cimini
Philadelphia, PA

As the lights dimmed, and the beginning chords of "Born in the USA" clearly rang out from the stage, I once again had that special feeling that can only be experienced at a Bruce Springsteen concert.

Bruce is definitely "magic in the night" but this particular night was extra-special to me because I finally had my dream come true — which was sitting in a *front row center* seat at a Bruce show!

The concert itself was incredible, but actually being inches away from the stage certainly added to the event! Bruce was at his best, as usual, and he gave us an electrifying show. Despite the heat — not to mention the Philly humidity — he rocked and rolled through 28 songs, and gave Philly a night to remember. He shouted, "I need some *air-conditioning*!" at one point during the show, and then added that we were "real troopers" and he was proud "that we didn't let the heat get us down."

Throughout the evening Bruce mainly concentrated on playing his newer songs and only performed "Badlands" from *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. "Rosalita" and "Jungleland" were omitted from the concert. However, Bruce used "Sherry Darling" as the final encore and did not disappoint his fans at all! He did achieve the intimate relationship with the crowd that many people were skeptical of, and didn't believe he could do in huge stadiums such as the Vet.

Maybe I didn't dance with Bruce (a girl four seats away received that honor) but it was still the best night of my life! And he did sing and point right to *me* several times during the show, which was an experience in itself!

The enthusiasm of the crowd was terrific and the intense atmosphere made me feel as though I were attending the biggest and happiest party ever to exist! The unique excitement at a Bruce Springsteen concert is not to be equaled, and that memory will always be with me!

August 18, 19, 21, 22, 1985
East Rutherford, NJ
Giants Stadium

By Ken Kidd
Colchester, CT

I'd like to give you my impressions of the first 4 Meadowlands shows. The sets of each show barely changed; the only differences being; "Darlington County" (8/19), "Used Cars" and "Growin' Up" (8/21), and "Two Hearts" (8/22). Disappointingly they didn't play "Rosalita," "Jungleland," "Backstreets,"

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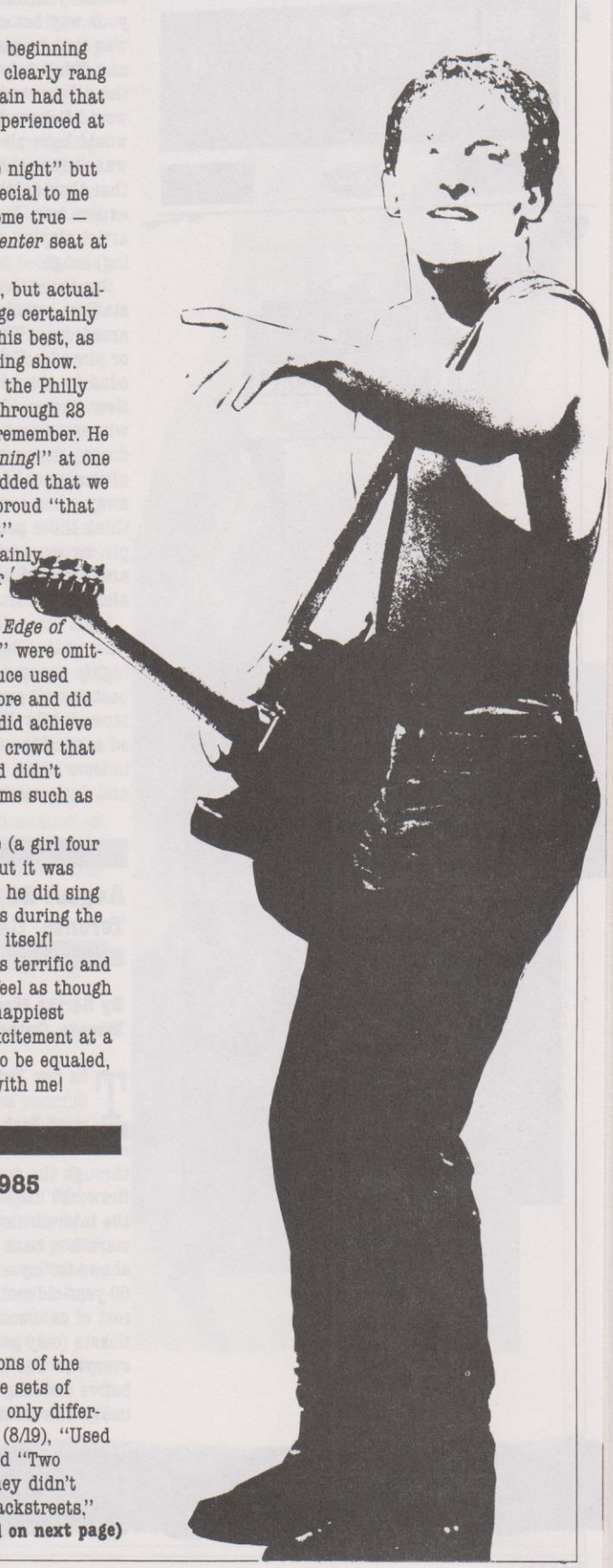

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

Top: Meadowlands sign, Middle: Giants Stadium. Bottom: Signing autographs.

(Continued from previous page)

"Racing In The Street," or the "Detroit Medley" any of the nights. All of the shows included "Seeds," which could possibly be one of the most powerful songs he's ever written. I love that line: "If I could spare the spit, I'd lay one on your shiny chrome, and send you on your way home." One thing that confused me was that he played "Johnny 99" every night, and didn't substitute other Nebraska songs on the different nights. The "Top Ten" fans wouldn't have known the difference, and he would have pleased the diehards more. It wasn't that the shows weren't great; it's just that they didn't have the variety I've come to expect from Bruce. He seemed like any other artist playing all of his "best" (i.e. biggest selling) songs.

One thing that irked me was that these stadium crowds were much ruder than the arena ones. When Bruce started to tell a story, or played a *Nebraska* song - it was mass exodus for the johns. Yes, it even happens in New Jersey. Also, each and every night I witnessed people sitting in the front rows leave during the encores. To me this seems to be the ultimate act of disrespect. It's like walking away when someone's talking to you. And to think these people had tickets when many people, as you could see each night outside the arena, would have killed for tickets inside; let alone in the front rows.

Little Steven's appearance on the last night was great. "Two Hearts" was terrific, and highly charged. I felt the fourth night was the best overall performance, easily the most intense, while "Growin' Up" was the best received song of the stand. Bruce I'd like to see you indoors again, so please release *Murder, Inc.*, and dump most of the "Top Ten" fans.

August 26, 27, 1985
Toronto, CANADA
Exhibition Stadium

By Bertha Madott
Toronto, Ontario

The two Toronto concerts had the perfect Summer setting--the rundown CNE Amusement Park, with the ferris wheel and the roller coaster all lit up after dark and visible through the open stage. There was even a fireworks display from the waterfront during the intermission. After a 17 hour lining-up marathon back in July, I had tickets for both shows for myself and my family, including my 60-year-old mother who cheered along with the rest of us. Because of a threat of counterfeit tickets (only one of which ever materialized) everyone was carefully scrutinized twice before entering the stadium, causing unimaginable chaos. We finally got to our seats, and two minutes later, the band was on stage and launched into three & a half hours of wonderful music.

After being blasted by non-stop hype in the media, I was afraid to hope for a great concert. What nonsense! Long time fans should "show a little faith" and stop comparing today with yesterday. The sound was excellent, even better than last year (Bruce's first ballpark appearance) and the voice I heard was in top form, full of passion and fire. The next night's concert has a few variations: a powerful "Darkness" and for old time fans, "Growing Up" complete with the "Bear" monologue. On Both evenings, Bruce introduced "My Hometown" with a request for support for the Daily Bread Food Bank. He also sang "Can't Help Falling in Love with You" beginning the song with a few poignant words about Elvis.

Having spent countless hours lately waiting for these concerts in ticket lines, bus terminals, traffic jams and parking lots, I've had lots of time to mull over the Springsteen experience, and I'm convinced these large scale shows are not a mistake. What I heard, musically speaking, was first rate. What I saw, always from less than choice seats, was acceptable, much better than I expected after all the media critisim. If there ever was a time when Bruce's songs were the voice of one crying in the wilderness, it is now, and the more people who can see and share this experience, the better off we all will be.

August 31, September 1, 1985
East Rutherford, NJ
Giants Stadium

By David A Ufer
New Milford, NJ

Baaaaawwwwwn In The U.S.A.!!" Ohmigod! I can't believe I'm finally seeing Bruce Springsteen again. It's only been a year since the last time I saw him, across the street at the Meadowlands Arena, but it was the longest year of my life.

"Keep pushin' 'til it's understood, and these badlands start treatin' us good!"

60,000 fans are up on their feet, pumping their arms in the air as each chorus of "Badlands" is belted out. My heart is pounding away almost as furiously as Mighty Max is pounding out the beat.

"Thunder Road" closes out the first set with Bruce giving Clarence the soul kiss to end all soul kisses. The second set was a whirlwind of guitars, saxes, drums and Bruce bouncing and running all over the stage and beyond.

The second set closed out with Bruce introducing Little Steven to play a series of rousing encores. For the first time on any stage,

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"Bruce, I'd like to see you indoors again, so please release 'Murder Inc'...."

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anywhere, "Stand On It" was played, with such zest and power that the record version seems pale in comparison.

This concert and the one the following night reinforces my love and devotion to the only man capable of wearing the title, "Boss."

September 4, 1985
Pontiac, MI
Silverdome

By David Peltz
Farmington Hills,MI

After attending my first "stadium" show in Cleveland on August 7th, I was filled with disappointment. For Bruce's September 4th show at the Pontiac Silverdome, I was ready for the worst.

Bruce had two things going against him. First, the Silverdome is notorious for having the worst sound in the country; watching a concert there is something akin to watching a concert in a cave.

The second thing Bruce had going against him was the heat. It was near 90 degrees inside the un-air conditioned Silverdome (Bruce would later say that those were the second worst heat conditions that he'd ever encountered for a concert). Well, it turns out that I had nothing to worry about. The technicians took care of the sound, and Bruce took care of the heat. Boy did he ever!

It was basically the standard "stadium" set. Highlights included "Seeds," "I'm Goin' Down," "Thunder Road" and "Cadillac Ranch." I thought that, like most of the other "stadium" shows, the "Twist and Shout" medley would be the last song, but Bruce decided that he would end the show with something special. "We haven't done this in a while" Bruce shouted to the 70,000 plus delirious Silverdome fans, "but this is Detroit, isn't it?" What followed was the greatest version of the Detroit Medley that I've ever heard. It was an amazing show.

It seems that Bruce has successfully made the transition from arenas to giant stadiums. What next? Bruce Springsteen live from the moon?

September 6, 1985
Indianapolis, IN
Hoosierdome
(NO REPORT)

September 9, 10, 1985
Miami, FL
Orangebowl

By Linda Conner
Miami, FL

Forget the term concert. The Miami shows were less like concerts than they were unbelievable stadium parties—parties of humanity featuring the best band and the biggest sound system ever. But then a Springsteen show has never fit neatly into the idea of the traditional concert, (you know those rowdy dope-smoking havens where rock stars play their guitars like they do a part of their anatomy, and scream lyrics that compel teenage children to run away from home). In fact, among the 140,000 who saw Springsteen play during those two warm, infected Miami nights, there were plenty of moms and dads dancing and clapping right along with their kids. And there were also a few grandparents.

One such gray-haired type sat right behind me and while he didn't seem to know any of the songs, and his youthful friend was only familiar with *Born in the USA*, they both thoroughly enjoyed the ambiance, the scene, the this-is-what-it's-all-about, riding the crest of a popular notion with 70,000 other people who by virtue of geographical location might know something about old abandoned beach houses and getting wasted by the heat, but nothing of the song (Bruce didn't play it that night anyway).

But there is nothing wrong with that. It didn't affect Bruce and the band's impeccable performance—the E Street Band has never been tighter. Bruce's heart and soul was in the music and the joy, like a fever, infected the crowd.

The concerts were short by Springsteen standards, around two hours of music. Most people left by or during the encores. But every moment spent inside the stadium was pure unadulterated fun. I stop short of saying "magic," because I'm of the old guard.

The Miami shows were a far cry from Tampa's Jai Lai Fronton ten years ago. Still, those stadium shows weren't like anything else. Once again Springsteen has redefined the word "concert." Concerts as we have known them are dead! Long live the Boss!

September 13, 14, 1985
Dallas, TX
Cottonbowl

By Dale Martin
Dallas, TX

A local radio station had renamed it "The Bruce Bowl" and gave up to the minute reports on weather and traffic as we joined the long lines of fans on our way to see Bruce on the first night of his Texas stop. It was Friday the 13th and the weather was overcast with rain expected. Bruce hit the stage at 7:45p.m. and launched into a blistering version of "Born In The USA." He followed with the

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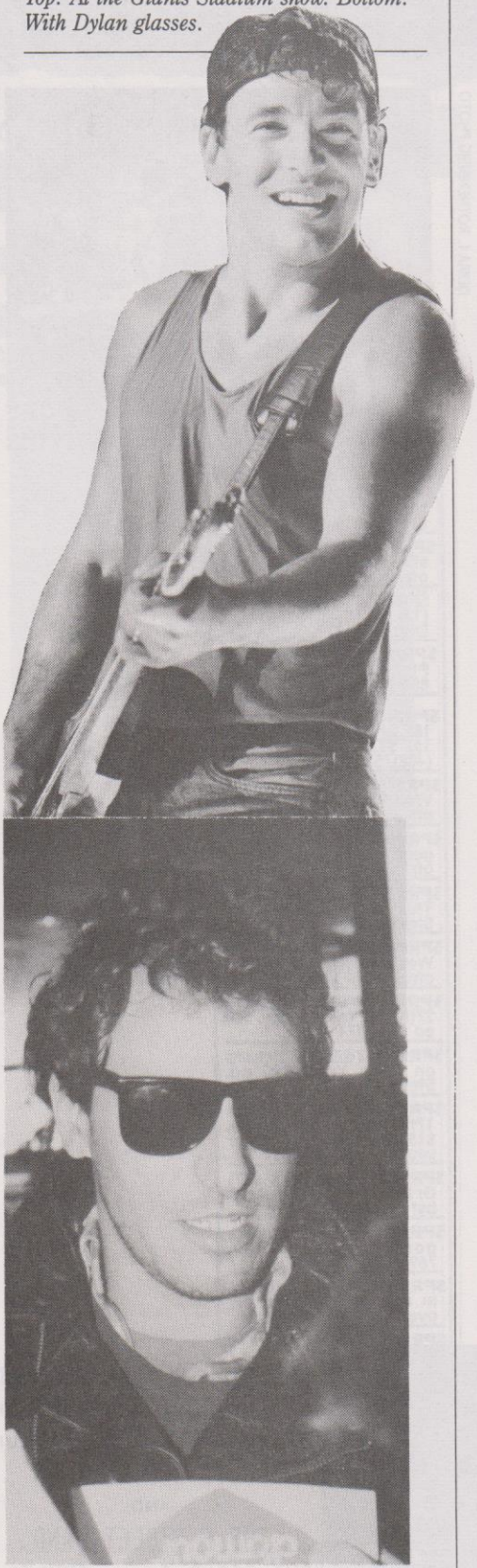
Top: At the Giants Stadium show. Bottom: With Dylan glasses.



DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

"What followed was the greatest version of the 'Detroit Medley' I've ever heard...."

"Some guy in the second row took off his artificial leg and threw it on stage...."

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

Field & Plaza $100/bst ofr 278-0903

SPRINGSTEEN 4 tickets for 9/19 $150 each 865-1316 before 9pm

SPRINGSTEEN tickets 6 still avail $100 ea. or bst ofr. 656-8710 aft 5

SPRINGSTEEN TICKETS (11) 1st Tier, $150 each Dan 659-1279

SPRINGSTEEN Tickets Plaza level $75/bst ofr 886-2008

SPRINGSTEEN tickets 9-18. LF1/CF1 rows 3 & 15. $750/ofr. Call John (408)757-8508 after 4pm.

SPRINGSTEEN 2 tickets Wed 9/18 $125 ea or bst ofr Eves 895-2102

SPRINGSTEEN 2 tickets, good seats $100 ea/bst ofr 533-5096

SPRINGSTEEN 4 tickets Thur, 9-19, $100/bst ofr. Steve 547-0365

SPRINGSTEEN tickets (8) Wed or Thurs $100/bst ofr Vallejo (707)642-5050

SPRINGSTEEN tickets 27th row from stage. $80 ea 887-7571

SPRINGSTEEN 3 tickets on lawn Wed, $90 ea. Steve 794-5172

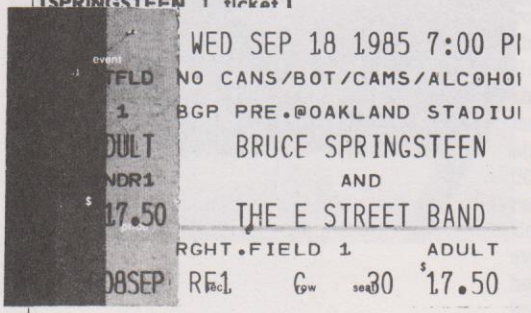
SPRINGSTEEN Tickets 17th row from stage, $150/bst ofr, also other seats avail. 634-2851

SPRINGSTEEN Tickets (7) Great seats. Wed 9/18, bst ofr 486-0170 eve

SPRINGSTEEN tickets good seats $100. 769-6107

SPRINGSTEEN tickets 4 in row for 9/19 Bst ofr over $200 Bob 522-2024

SPRINGSTEEN 1 ticket



Top: With the band at the Meadowlands. Bottom: Ads from the San Francisco papers, ticket to Oakland.

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standards, "Badlands," "Out In The Streets," "Johnny 99." Then when we were all expecting another *Nebraska* cut, Bruce stepped up to the mike and told the story of playing in Houston last year and being concerned about the out of work oilfield workers. "Here's a new song, it's called 'Seeds.' " The remainder of the set was pretty much standard with a very hot rendition of "Trapped" and closing the first half with "Thunder Road."

Thirty minutes later he was back with "Cover Me." For "Dancing In The Dark" he pulled up a small girl of about eight- or nine-years-old. Bruce carried her up to the drum riser to dance then gave her a big hug before packing her back down to her mother.

During "Downbound Train," which is my wife's favorite song, he mumbled one of the lines like maybe he'd forgotten the words for a second. For "Pink Cadillac" they brought out a map to prove that the garden of Eden was really located in New Jersey. The band took a short break while Bruce soloed on "This Land Is Your Land." It was haunting to see him all alone on stage singing to 60,000 people with just a guitar and harmonica. He closed the show with this song but was quickly back on stage with "Born To Run," and "Ramrod." The crowd called him back for a long version of "Twist and Shout" and "Do You Love Me" and after proclaiming that he was just a prisoner of rock n' roll, Bruce and the band began to leave the stage. The crowd was still on it's feet, clapping and screaming at the top of their lungs. Bruce and Clarence both pointed at their wrist like they were out of time but the crowd persited. So out came the band again and they tore into "Stand On It" causing this wild Texas crowd to come unglued.

Just as the final notes were being played some guy in the second row took off his artificial leg and threw it on stage. Bruce just stood there for a second then said, "Damn, that guy took the song serious." Then his face lit up and he said, "You get a song for that." He picked up the guy's leg and placed it next to Max's bass drum and went around to each band member yelling, "Travelin' Band, Travelin' Band." After they'd finished the old Creedence classic it was finally time to say goodnight.

September 18, 19, 1985
Oakland, CA
Oakland Stadium

By Pam McCampbell
Willows, CA

September of 1985 turned into the best month of my life. On the 19th, we saw Bruce and Band at the Oakland Coliseum. This was my first "Bruce concert." What a fantastic experience! As "Born In The USA" began, I couldn't believe it was really him. Although our seats were good, I was very pleasantly surprised by how clear the screens were. My husband thought he was watching the video! I was amazed at how much better so many songs were live, compared to the record. "Working On The Highway" had never been one of my favorites, but live it is unbelievable, as was "Cover Me." "Seeds" was so powerful, I can barely wait for its release. Every song he did had something to make it special. He started "Highway Patrolman" and forgot the words and had to start over. The audience loved it. The highlights were just too numerous to list, but when he sang "Growin' Up" I didn't think anything could get any better.

September 23, 24, 1985
Denver, CO
Mile-High Stadium

By Patricia Kolasinski
Denver, Colorado

It was 7:36 p.m. and I thought if Bruce didn't come out soon I would explode from excitement. I had been patient for 14 years waiting to see Bruce and I couldn't be patient any more. Then the lights in the stadium went out and I heard a voice cut through the air and ask how everyone was doing. Then in the darkness came the words, "Born down in a dead man's town." Finally it had begun, I was fulfilling my lifelong dream.

A few weeks earlier I had been informed that I was going to lose my hearing and nothing could be done about it; from that day forward all I could think about was to hear Bruce in concert before my world went silent. All through the concert I listened so intently to each word and note that was played so I could engrave them on my brain and soul. So when my world goes silent I can still hear Bruce singing just for me inside my head.

Bruce is a great showman. He made me laugh, cry and think about those less fortunate than I. I took from that concert an inspiration that I could not have received any place else. For the first time in my life, if just for a few hours I felt like I belonged there in that audience.

He did all my favorites. All the songs were great to me. When he did "Ramrod" I broke into tears; I had tried to imagine how it would sound in concert but my imagination could not compare to the real thing.

From the moment Bruce came on stage until he ended the concert he seemed to make each person feel that he was singing just for them, because he enjoyed what he was doing. I felt

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"Another suprise: 'Rosalita.' It seemed a perfect way to end a perfect tour...."

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he meant it when he apologized for any inconvenience caused by cancelling Sunday's concert. Then he thanked us for celebrating his birthday with him.

This was my first time to see Bruce and it will be the last time for me to hear him in concert. I will remember that night for the rest of my life! Bruce's rendition of "This Land Is Your Land" with that haunting harmonica will echo in my soul forever. Bruce is going to fade away from my ears but not from my heart and soul. Bruce is definitely the *BOSS*, which I never doubted since the first time I heard his voice on tape in 1971, when I was seven years old. I would definitely drive all night again to see Bruce.

September 27, 29, 30
October 2, 1985
Los Angeles, CA
Coliseum

By Chris Doherty
Fontana, CA

How can I condense four nights of ecstasy onto one page? The days that Bruce and the Band spent in Los Angeles were like a week long celebration. Local radio stations played hour long sets of his music, people were doing anything to get tickets, and tour shirts became the uniform of the day; but nothing could top actually being at one of the shows.

Because of weather complications in Denver, the opening night for the L.A. shows was delayed until Friday the 27th. During the hour long wait before the concert, I sat waiting amid 85,000 other Springsteen fans. I never felt so small. Just as I was wondering how one man could bring any sense of community to a crowd this large, Bruce took the stage and dispelled all my doubts. With the first beat of "Born In The USA" everyone was up on their feet, dancing and singing. He then mixed some old and new numbers, including "Johnny 99" (which echoed hauntingly inside the huge L.A. Coliseum), "The River," "Trapped," and "Seeds" (a *very* powerful song). He also performed a chilling version of Edwin Starr's "War," which he dedicated to all the young people in the audience, because "Blind faith in your leaders in 1985 is gonna get you killed."

The second half of the show was opened with the remix version of "Cover Me," which led into almost all of the singles from the *Born In The USA* album. The audience sang the first verse of "Hungry Heart," and "Cadillac Ranch" became a marathon sing-along. "Bobby Jean" went over well (I heard several people around me change the last two words of the song to "Little Steve"). Every night, before he played "My Hometown," Bruce encouraged us to donate to the local food banks.

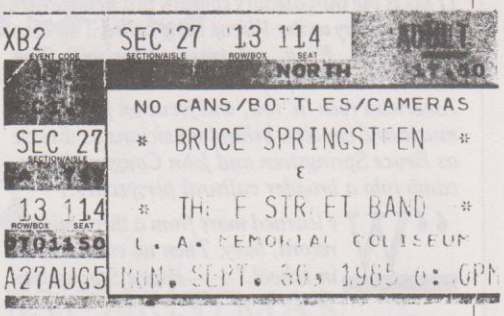
For his encores (which are shows in themselves) Bruce started with "This Land Is Your Land," included "Stand On It" and "Because The Night," (the first night even featured the world premiere of "Janey Don't You Lose Heart") and ended with "Twist & Shout/Do You Love Me." But during that set, when he lit into "Born To Run," the lights of the Coliseum flashed on. I peeled my eyes away from the stage long enough to look behind me and see 85,000 fists punching the air to the beat of the drums and guitars. I didn't think I'd ever feel that sense of unity again ... until his next show on Sunday.

I got to see two of his remaining three shows, and they all followed the same basic pattern. There were a few exceptions; during his Sunday show, Bruce told the whole Adam and Eve introduction to "Pink Cadillac," and gave us an especially fired up version of "Thunder Road." He added two songs to his encore, the first of which silenced the entire coliseum; it was Elvis' "Falling In Love With You." The second one was "Travelin' Band," and included Jon Landau on guitar!

Springsteen's last show of his Born In The USA Tour was held on Wednesday, October 2nd, and it was pure magic. Part of the reason for this was because of where I was sitting. Originally, mine were the lowest seats, clear in the back of the Coliseum, directly behind a concession stand. I found out that other areas had been arranged for those fans with terrible views. Since this applied to me, I traded my tickets for two new seats. Only a true Bruce fan could understand my delirium when I found out that the area provided for us was down on the floor, next to the seats that people paid $400 for. I ended up in the 10th row, not 30 feet away from the stage!

You could feel the excitement in the air. Even Bruce let us know that we were getting "The Last Night Treatment." This show's format was similar to the others. But he did add "Darkness On The Edge Of Town," and gave us a very touching acoustic version of "No Surrender" (which he dedicated to Little Steven *and* the E Street Band). During "Dancing In The Dark," he pulled his wife on stage to dance, and broke the heart of every girl in the front row. "I always save the last dance for her," he quickly mentioned before going into the next number.

He surprised us by singing "Growin' Up," with the short introduction of "This is for my older fans." He included the Bear Story and we all went crazy. Following this was another surprise: "Rosalita." We had waited and hoped for this number since opening night. It seemed a perfect way to end a perfect tour. Before he left the stage, Bruce repeated a couple of times: "We'll miss ya. We'll be back." I can't wait!



Top: Ticket to LA (scalper's paradise).
Bottom: Let's go crazy!

DEBRA L. ROTHENBERG PHOTO

The ties that bind

BY WAYNE KING

(This is the introductory column to a new feature by New Jersey writer Wayne King called The Ties That Bind. *King, a former editor with* The Record *and author of numerous articles on great American rock 'n' roll, will focus on putting the music and concepts behind musicians as diverse as Bruce Springsteen and John Cougar Mellencamp into a broader cultural perspective.)*

"We learned more from a three minute record, baby, Then we ever learned in school." —Bruce Springsteen

"I didn't learn anything in high school. I was into playing in my band, finding girls. . .So they tell you to read these books and you say, 'Get outta here! I got this girl over here, why you want me to read this book?' So the teacher says, 'But you're going to need this later.' You think, 'I'm busy learning the chords to "My Generation," and this lady's telling me I need Hemingway?!' Then you find out, about five years later, that you need that! Why didn't I listen?" *—Little Steven*

Those two thoughts accurately sum up the feelings which led to my proposing this column. Bruce's line from "No Surrender" tells the story of my glory days of the mid-'70s, and Little Steven's comments to David McGee in a 1982 *Record* reflect my thinking ten years down the road from high school. If rock 'n' roll is to continue its death grip on me (and it will), it's clearly time to understand it better by comparing it to the best 20th century American popular culture: books, movies, theatre, art.

Let's look briefly at three giant figures of American culture: John Steinbeck, Woody Guthrie and James Dean. We'll use Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, his epic 1939 account of the Joad family's journey from the dead-end Depression of Dust Bowl Oklahoma to the tarnished dreams of the Promised Land, California, as a jumping off point.

• The 1940 John Ford film of the novel was an immense influence on Bruce around the time of *Darkness On The Edge of Town*. He told Robert Duncan for the October 1978 *Cream* that "the movie affected me a lot. It brought up a lot of questions I didn't think of before." Dave Marsh originally planned to close his *Born To Run* Bruce bio with Tom Joad's revelatory speech from Chapter 28: "I'll be around in the dark. I'll be ever'where—wherever you look. Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. I'll be in the way guys yell when they're mad an'—I'll be in the way kids laugh, when they're hungry and they know supper's ready. An' when our folks eat the stuff they raise an' live in the houses they build—why, I'll be there." Sounds like it could be Tom Joad standing on the top of that hill in"Darkness On The Edge of Town."

• Woody Guthrie, author of "This Land Is Your Land" and an inspiration for *Nebraska* and the early works of Bob Dylan, wrote a song in tribute to Steinbeck's book called "Tom Joad."

• Steinbeck's other major work, *East of Eden*, was made into a movie with James Dean that inspired "Adam Raised A Cain."

• Dean's classic "Rebel Without A Cause" had an early screenplay treatment done by Irving Shulman. Shulman also wrote gritty urban epics about youth with titles like *The Amboy Dukes* (the name of Ted Nugent's first band) and *Cry Tough!* (the title of Nils Lofgren's second solo LP).

• The Porshe that Dean died in on September 30, 1955, was nicknamed "Little Bastard," a handle that at least one kid growing up 75 miles south of Dean's native Fairmount, Indiana, thought fit himself pretty well—John Cougar Mellencamp uses it as his production credit.

• "Rain On The Scarecrow," the scorching opening track on Mellencamp's great new album, uses a story from *Grapes'* Chapter 5 as the basis of its second verse.

None of these connections are particularly profound, but neither are they mere coincidence. At a time when most rock music and rock writing refuses to make such connections, it's only fitting that a magazine dedicated to rock 'n' roller making the most of the ties that bind us all to the freedom and promise of this country explore some of those connections. The idea is not to preach—that'd be tough to do, since I'm new to most of the stuff myself—or develop a new type of Bruce snobbery (as in "What, you mean you're not aware of the sociopolitical implications of Sergio Leone's spaghetti Westerns for Bruce's late '70's period?"). No, it's more to fulfill the promise of Greil Marcus' *Mystery Train*, as expalined in the author's note: "What I bring to this book. . .is no attempt at synthesis, but a recognition of unities in the American imagination that already exist. I wrote this book in an attempt to find some of (these), but I know now that to put oneself in touch with them is a life's work."

On tour

Capital Theater's Fire Benefit is hot!

BY KATHIE MANIACI

When a disastrous fire in Passaic, New Jersey left many homeless and also jobless, Gene Boccia, (bassist for LaBamba's Hubcaps and formerly the Jukes) decided he wanted to help out. With the help of LaBamba, Joe Piscopo, Little Steven, Southside Johnny and John Scher, the Passaic Fire Benefit Concert became a reality.

The crowd was ready to go when LaBamba and the Hubcaps hit the stage. The band played mostly Hubcap originals, like "Move on Up," and sprinkled in some soulful cover tunes. Screams and a standing ovation greeted Southside when he jumped onstage and joined the band in "Shake, Rattle and Roll." The Hubcaps played a terrific set, packed with energy.

Next out was Joe Piscopo, a native of Passaic. Instead of his usual standup show, Joe had a surprise for us. With a full band behind him, Joe came out wearing his Bruce outfit: jeans, heavy black boots, sleeveless jean jacket, bandana and Fender guitar! Playing guitar, he launched into his new single, "New Jersey," a delightful parody of Springsteen. Piscopo had all the moves down; the audience was in hysterics when he ran across the stage to dunk his head in a dishpan full of ice water a la Bruce, and then shook the water all over the band. When the song was over, the audience was screaming, "Brooooce, Brooooce!" Piscopo then took off the boots; "Man, you know I love Bruce, but now I respect him even more for wearing these for four hours doin' this!"

After Piscopo left the stage, one question remained. Was it going to be Southside next, or Little Steven, or both? Finally, Southside and the Jukes ran onstage. Looking strong and confident, Southside and Co. tore into "Love When It's Strong," "Talk to Me," and "I'm so Anxious;" all newly arranged and sounding tight. Bobby Bandiera, the new Jukes guitarist, plays perfectly against Southside; vocally and in stage presence. Southside has never looked better, whirling around the stage, working the band and the audience into a frenzy.

As everyone tried to catch their breath, Southside introduced his "special guest," and Little Steven bounded onto the stage, prowling around the stage like a "gypsy pirate" with zebra guitar and the mandatory headwrap and scarves. By this time, the audience was in the aisles and not about to calm down; and Steven took Southside and the Jukes into a searing version of "Out of the Darkness." Some of the memorable songs of the set were "Until the Good is Gone," "I Don't Wanna Go Home," "Bring it on Home to Me," "This Time It's For Real," and the classic "Hearts of Stone." By the end of the show, all three bands were sharing the stage, all old friends, all making music together.

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BACKSTREETS!

JUST PLAIN, THE BEST BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN SONG, PERIOD

The votes have been counted in our second annual pick the best Bruce Springsteen song contest and "Backstreets" has won once again (honestly, folks it wasn't our vote — we wanted "Drop On Down and Cover Me"). "Backstreets" barely beat out "Thunder Road" in both the categories of best song released on record and just plain the best song. "Roulette" was the big winner in the unreleased song category — perhaps Mr. Springsteen will take this as a show of support and finally release this masterpiece. "Because the Night" won in the field of best song written and given away, an indication of appreciation both for Patti Smith's interpretation and Bruce's fine concert performance. There were over 500 entries which we threw into a barrel and picked Angela Tosshi as the grand prize winner: She won copies of all the new UK picture discs. The ten second prize winners who won free Backstreets sweatshirts in awesome gray with blue type were Dan Denton, Pittsburgh, PA; Leslie Boone, Washington, D.C.; Mike Smith, Pontiac, MI; Kathryn Reesman, Los Angeles, CA; Bart Martin, Chicago, IL; Jennifer McGuire, Bensenville, IL; Steve Hudson, Boston, MA; Leanne Butterworth, Gainsville, GA; Steve Arthur, Portland, OR; and Mikael Bowman, Sweden. Thanks to all those who entered: We enjoyed your colorful postcards. Here are the results:

Best Bruce Springsteen song ever released on record: Backstreets 94 votes; Thunder Road 90; Jungleland 74; Born to Run 42; Badlands 38; Racing in the Streets 28; Incident on 57th Street 22; The River 20; Rosalita 18; Dancing in the Dark 14; Independence Day 12; and 46 others with ten or less votes.

Best unreleased Bruce Springsteen song: Roulette 144 votes; Seeds 86; The Promise 66; Murder, Inc. 31; Fire 28; This Hard Land 16; Cindy 14; Man at the Top 12; Frankie 12; The Fever 12; Because the Night 12; Loose Ends 11; and 39 others with ten or less votes.

Best song Bruce Springsteen wrote and gave away: Because the Night 184 votes; Fire 160; The Fever 78; Hearts of Stone 36; From Small Things 22; This Little Girl 22; Rendezvous 18; Protection 11; Talk to Me 11; and 17 others with ten or less votes.

Just plain the best Bruce Springsteen song, period: Backstreets 78 votes; Thunder Road 75; Jungleland 74; Born to Run 50; Racing in the Streets 24; Badlands 24; Incident on 57th St. 20; The River 19; Rosalita 19; Independence Day 18; Roulette 17; Point Blank 16; The Promise 15; Darkness on the Edge of Town 14; and 27 others with ten or less votes.

Our next contest is simple: Pick the title of Bruce's next record. Send on a postcard (only, please) before Jan. 15, 1986 to Contest, c/o Backstreets.

JACK DULUOZ PHOTO

On collecting

European boots out already

By Jack Duluoz

Bruce Springsteen is now the most bootlegged artist in the history of rock 'n' roll. His recent European tour really started the bootleggers rolling their tapes, seeing as bootlegging is quasi legal in Europe and Springsteen's popularity there is unmatched. In the three months since I last reported on new releases I've heard of over 50 new titles.

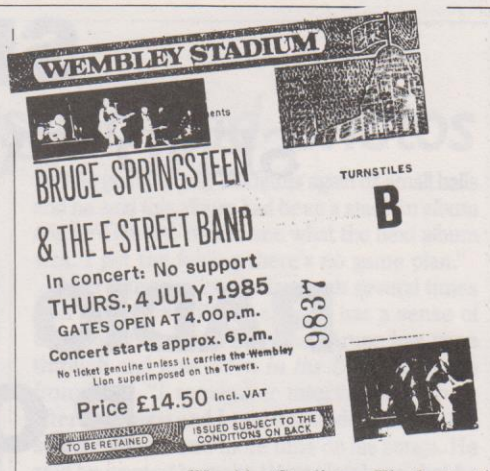
That's clearly more than I could report on here and since by far the majority of these releases are cheap, disposable rip offs, they don't matter anyway. So I'll run through some of the real gems and sometime in the future (when this flood stops) I'll try to give a breakdown of the best of the *Born in the USA* releases.

Most notable is "Reasons to Believe" a new two record set from the folks in Sweden who did "Sugarland," "Teardrops," etc. The quality on earlier releases has been historic and this album is no exception. The music is from the Kansas City show in 1984—not exactly the greatest show of the year but the high sound quality and the care in the packaging of this product makes it an interesting set. It's of comparable quality to "Sugarland" though lacking any unreleased material.

Absolutely the very best European set from this tour, is "Wembley Stadium" from Spacematic Records. This is a four record set with exceptional sound quality and a beautiful package. The concert is the Fourth of July show most notable for "Independence Day," for "Seeds" (these shows marked the premiere of that song) and for Little Steven's appearance for the encores. It also comes with a great insert 45 with full cover color too. All and all, "Wembley" is as good as they get.

Spacematic (I've never heard of this label before but they are almost up there with the Holsten Swedish label) also has two other noteworthy releases. "The Clear Difference" is the June 8th show at Gothenburg and it features excellent sound and a beautiful color (a reproduction of the "Cadillac" t-shirt). Once again it has four albums and comes with an insert 45 (this time of "Seeds") with a great full color sleeve.

And secondly, there is "Honeymoon," parts one and two, a four record set from the June 9th show (with some of the Dublin and Newcastle shows on the final record). The sound is again excellent but the packaging is at least a little hokey—it's just not designed well and looks trashy. The addition of the UK stuff makes this much more interesting—particularly because it includes the great off-key version of "When I Grow Up to be a Man" that Bruce played in Dublin. Again there's an insert 45 but with only a two-color sleeve.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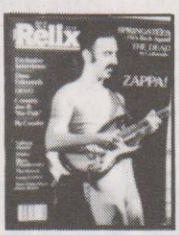

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In print

Hilburn's Springsteen book has passion and photos

By Charles R. Cross

There have been more than a dozen new Springsteen books released in the past year but none have been more notable than Robert Hilburn's recent book *Springsteen*. Published in hardbound by Rolling Stone Press/Scribners, it is a 256 page tome that's really the first serious book on Springsteen since Dave Marsh's *Born to Run*. The book is lavishly illustrated with photos that make up the best collection of Springsteen shots ever assembled.

The text is well written, insightful and offers an intimate look into what Bruce Springsteen is about. It features more actual quotes from Springsteen than any book to date and it was also the only book yet that Springsteen was specifically interviewed for. Hilburn, one of the nation's most respected music writers, works as the music critic for the Los Angeles Times and is syndicated in hundreds of papers throughout the nation.

"This was not meant to be a biography per se," Hillburn told us recently on an off day from Springsteen's stadium tour. "Dave's book is the biography—this was meant to be a personalized essay, a look at who he is and why he is important. I hope no one gets the idea that this was written to be the definitive biography."

Hilburn explained that the book was written to be part of a series of Rolling Stone Press books following ones already published on the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Dave Marsh's book on Elvis. He admits the photos tend to dominate the copy both in his book and throughout the series by intention.

In his role with the Times, Hilburn has interviewed Springsteen in 1976, 1978, 1980, 1984, and 1985 so he had more than enough interview material to work from. Whenever possible he lets Springsteen speak for himself and Bruce's quotes provide a historical backdrop to the run-through of his career.

Though Hilburn didn't intend to write a biography, after finishing the book he says he almost wished he would have had the time and space to write a more biographical work, since the stories and quotes he uncovered were so interesting.

Another great story Hilburn couldn't use was what Bob Dylan had to say about Springsteen and about *Nebraska*. Early in Springsteen's career, he was called "the new Dylan" and it was a tag neither Dylan nor Springsteen really understood.

"I was talking to Dylan one night about songwriters," Hilburn said, "and Bruce's name came up. He said 'You know that Springsteen, he ought to go out and live more. He ought to get away from that New Jersey and all these friends of his. He ought to go live in a cave in Tibet for a couple of months. But boy, that *Nebraska* album is something."

Dylan continued: "And what is with this name Boss? You know that used to be a negative term. They used to hate bosses. The boss was somebody you used to have to go punch your time-clock to."

"Dylan said: 'That Springsteen ought to go out and live more. He ought to go live in a cave in Tibet for a couple of months. He ought to get away from that New Jersey.' "

Hilburn said Dylan also noted that he liked "Racing in the Streets."

If Hilburn himself had to pick a favorite Springsteen album he'd chose *Nebraska*. The writer has seen Springsteen over 30 times stretching back to 1974 when Bruce played at the famous CBS Convention. He cites his favorite Springsteen song as "Jersey Girl" and the best show as one of the Vietnam Veterans shows in Los Angeles in 1981.

Though many have criticized Springsteen's recent move to stadiums, it's a move that Hilburn supports. "To see him reach this challenge and to try something like stadium shows—which have almost always been a disaster for other performers—is exciting. It gives us new information about Bruce. The frustration is some of the fans that come—you get the feeling there's going to be a punch out. The other night some guys in front of me talked during the introduction to "This Land is Your Land' and throughout the entire song—I just wanted to knock their heads together.

"I think Bruce grew and learned from this whole stadium thing. But then again, I liked the 'Dancing in the Dark' 12" remix."

Hilburn said he asked Springsteen during the tour what his next move was. "He said 15 months for the next record. And I asked him if he was going to play stadiums again or small halls and he said this album had been a stadium album and he'd have to wait to see what the next album was. I get the feeling there's no game plan."

After interviewing Springsteen several times over the years Hilburn says he has a sense of the growth and maturity that Bruce has gone through and how *Born in the USA* has come from that. "I remember interviewing Bruce after *Darkness* and I said it sounded like he was spending more and more time on his songs. He said he wanted to make them simply so that he was sure he reached people.

"One of my pet peeves about rock 'n' roll is that critics get into these cults and jams and then they say it's the public's fault they don't pick up on these acts. But I think it's the challenge of the artist to reach the public and still present a strong vision. Bruce seemed to want to do that—to reach a lot of people—and I think he did it with the best intentions. He wants to spread the gospel of his message.

"My theory is," Hilburn continued, "that *Born in the USA* is *Nebraska* with chocolate on it. If he would have stuck with indoor shows we would look back three years from now and we wouldn't know anything new about Springsteen. So he tried the outdoor thing in Europe and he liked it a lot. I talked to him in Paris and he said, 'Boy, you can see the moon.' "

He tells the hilarious story of interviewing Bruce after one of the *River* shows and having Springsteen ask to see his notes. "I'd written down notes on every song," he explained," and given them grades. There were three with Cs. He looked at it and said 'Well I can understand that one, but you're underating this one.' He said, 'too low a score on that.' "

Another insight into Springsteen comes from a friend of Jimmy Iovine who told this story: Springsteen had given another performer a song of his, saying it was okay to use it but he wanted to listen to it before they put it out. "It was someone close to Bruce too," Hilburn related. "So they recorded the song, spent a few weeks on it and came back and Bruce listened to it and said no. It was nothing personal, he just thought the music wasn't right. He totally listens to the music and he lets that direct what he wants to do."

Hilburn is admittedly a big Springsteen fan and he's been lambasted by the Times readers for writing about Springsteen constantly. He says he considers Springsteen an important part of rock 'n' roll history and one who should be used as a reference. Perhaps the best thing about his book is that he never seems to lose touch with the enthusiasm he feels toward his subject.

"I was thinking about it the other day," he says. "I mean, has there been anyone as good as he is? Nobody's mixed purpose and entertainment the way he does.

"Probably the best thing about one of his shows," he says with a smile," is that you go in and you come back and you think, 'yeah, this is as good as it's ever been.' "

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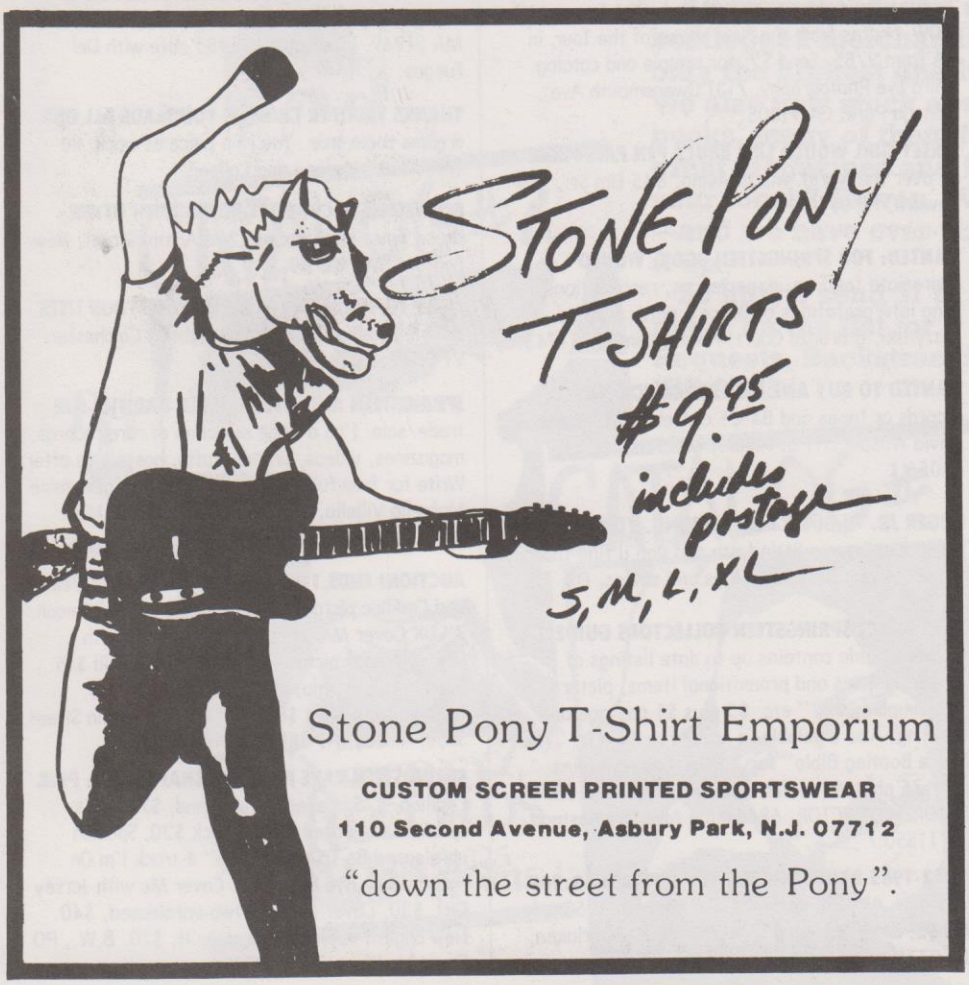

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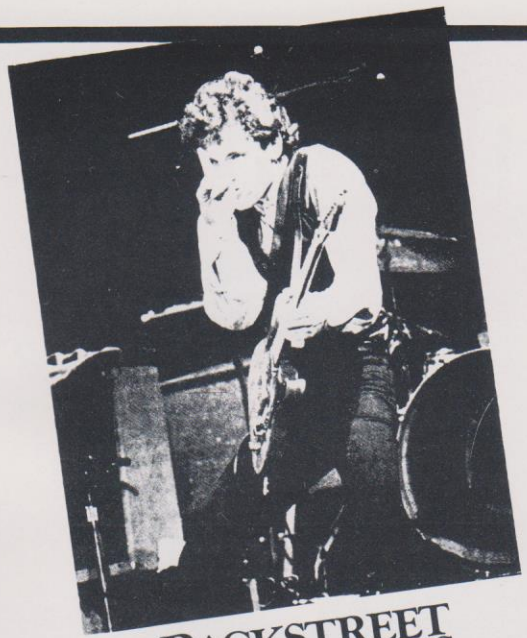

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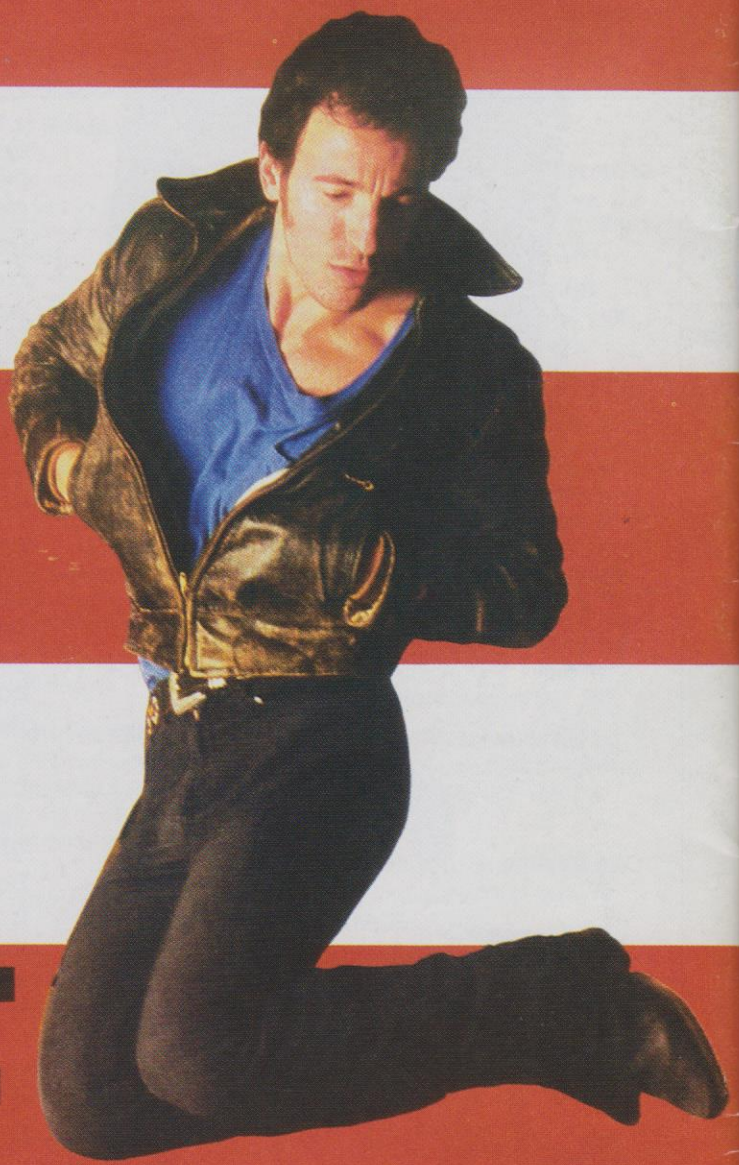
Off the wall

New Album And Cassette



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

'BORN IN THE U.S.A.'